FRESH FACTS ABOUT THE £10 NOTE SCHEME. *See page 463.*

SHORT STORIES

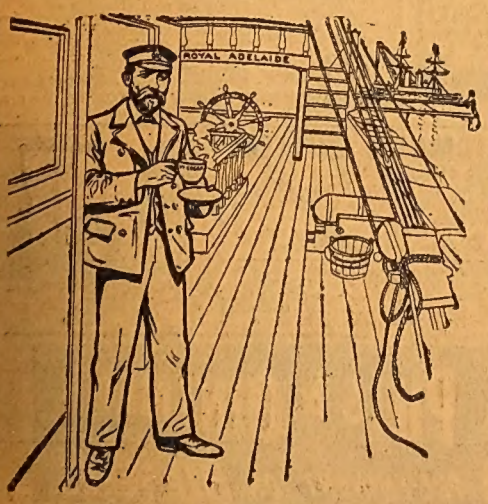
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 615. FOR WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 13TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

ANOTHER SEAMAN AND

DR TIBBLES' VI-Cocoa

"There is nothing like Vi-Cocoa."



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BIG PRIZE SCHEME

For MARCH, 1901.

25,602 PRIZES, value £10,000

LIST OF PRIZES:

1	Cash Prize	£50	0
1	Cash Prize	£40	0
10	Handsome Pianos, in walnut, £40 each	400	0
5	Cash Prizes, £25 each	125	0
10	Gents' Bicycles, Freewheels, £17 17s.	178	10
10	Ladies' Bicycles, Free-wheels, £17 17s.	178	10
10	Cash Prizes, £10 each	100	0
20	Jennes's Sewing Machines, £8 each	160	0
20	Cash Prizes, £5 each	100	0
50	Rolled Gold Lever Watches, £2 10s. each	125	0
100	Cash Prizes, £2 each	200	0
50	Dinner Services (56 pieces), £2 each	100	0
50	Folding Bed Chairs, £2 each	100	0
50	Ladies' Travelling Trunks, £2 each	100	0
200	Cash Prizes, £1 each	200	0
200	Ladies' Leather Hatboxes, £1 each	200	0
100	Basket Arm Chairs, upholstered, £1	100	0
400	pairs Blankets, 15s. per pair	300	0
200	½-doz. Electro-plated Forks, large, 15s. per ½ doz.	150	0
200	½-doz. Electro-plated Forks, small, 15s. per ½-doz.	£150	0
500	Ladies' Umbrellas, 15/- ea.	375	0
500	Gents' Umbrellas, 15s. each	375	0
400	Best Electro-plated Teapots, 15s. each	300	0
400	Handsome Meat Carvers, with Steel in Case, 15s. set	300	0
1000	Cash Prizes, 10s. each	500	0
1000	pairs Bed Sheets, 10s. each	500	0
1000	White Linen Table Cloths, 10s. each	500	0
1000	Ladies' Umbrellas, 7/6 each	375	0
1000	Ladies' Leather Purses, 7/6 each	375	0
200	½-doz. Table Knives, 7/6 per ½-doz.	75	0
200	½-doz. Dessert do., 7/6 per ½-doz.	75	0
2000	Ladies' Dress Lengths, Navy Blue Serge, 7/6 each	750	0
2000	Cash Prizes of 5s each	500	0
4715	Ladies' Leather Handbags, 4s. each	943	0
4000	½-doz. Fine Linen Cambric Handkerchiefs, 2/6 per ½-doz.	500	0
4000	Handsome Work-boxes, 2/6 each	500	0
25,602		**£10,000**	**0**

CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION.

Every tablet of **Watson's Matchless Cleanser** is enclosed in a Wrapper, with signature up the centre of same. Save the WHOLE Wrapper (tops of Wrappers will be disqualified), and send, postage or carriage paid, to **Joseph Watson & Sons Limited, Whitehall Soap Works, Leeds,** not later than MARCH 31ST, 1901. Each package will be counted as one lot; separate entries must be sent under separate covers. If any parcel arrives, postage or carriage not being fully paid, such parcel will be refused. Be careful to see that the full postage is paid. Each parcel sent in must contain the full name and address of sender, and number of Wrappers sent in must be marked on the same paper. On outside of parcel write lecibly **"Prize Competition."** The prizes will be awarded in the above order to the senders of the highest numbers of Wrappers. A list, giving result of the Competition, will be sent with each prize when it is sent out. Every wrapper must have first contained soap. No employee of Joseph Watson & Sons Limited will be eligible. All prizes will be despatched about April 25th.

WATSON'S MATCHLESS CLEANSER

The Best Soap for all purposes, still holds the lead. Quality perfect. Is the Housewife's Friend. It saves her health, her strength, her wealth; washes her clothes with ease and leaves them sweet and pure, and will not injure the most delicate fabric. **It has the largest sale of 1-lb. tablets in the world.** Sold by all Grocers, Oilmen, &c., throughout the United Kingdom. Buy it. Prove it and secure a Prize

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OUR OFFER, READ IT

2-Pint Cooker Free.	For 25 white squares like this from front of 2-lb. packet.
2-Pint Cooker Free.	For 30 white squares like this from front of 1-lb. packet.
3-Pint Cooker Free.	For 40 white squares like this from front of 2-lb. packet.
3-pint Cooker Free.	For 75 white squares like this from front of 1-lb. packet.

Required number of White Squares must be sent in at one time.

On receipt by us, POSTAGE PAID, of required number of WHITE SQUARES, or price mentioned below, before Sept. 1, 1901, a Quaker Oats Cooker will be sent at once, carriage paid, to any address in Great Britain or Ireland.

If you want the Cooker at once, and have not the required number of WHITE SQUARES, send 2/- for 2-pint size, or 2/6 for 3-pint size. **The amount you pay will be refunded immediately** correct number of WHITE SQUARES is sent us, postage paid, if received by us before Sept. 1st, 1901. Write your address plainly and mention this Paper.

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QUAKER OATS, sold in 1-lb. and 2-lb. Packets only.

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can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to **IMPROVE** both **HEALTH** and **FIGURE** without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: *"Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."*

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

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FREE. FREE

Our £2 10s. Real Silver Watch (with chain), or **A Real Gold Ring** Set with REAL DIAMONDS and other stones.

SEND NO MONEY.

NO MONEY REQUIRED. WE TRUST YOU.

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We do not want your money. Just send us a stamped addressed envelope and say that you will either sell the jewellery or return it to us if you fail to sell it. On receiving your letter we will at once post you the jewellery.

When sold, send us the 13/6 you have received for same, and we will at once send you ABSOLUTELY FREE our £2 10/- Real Silver Watch with Chain, or the Gold Ring, whichever you desire.

A WRITTEN GUARANTEE for TEN years sent with each watch.

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PRE-EMINENT FOR 60 YEARS.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 615.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending Oct. 13th, 1900.

A Horsey Woman:

OR,

Man's Honour.

"RITA, this is good of you."

"I had to go into the village, so I said I'd take in the station on the way back and pick you up. Jump in, the mare won't stand with her head turned homewards."

Hollis did so, and as they dashed off, the small tiger hung on behind, and clambered on as best he could.

"I expect you're awfully cold," the girl said, pressing her feet against the foot-board and gripping the reins hard. "It's an east wind, and that always makes Trilby unmanageable. I've had ever such work with her this afternoon. Hold on," as they swung round the corner. "Tom, see Captain Hollis's bag doesn't fall off."

"Let me take the reins," said the Captain. "Your wrists must ache, and I'm sure your hands are half frozen."

"Oh no, they're not, and she's fifty times worse with anyone else handling her. We shall just be in time to dress. How's your mother?"

"She's all right, thanks. Have you got a big party at the Hall?"

"About the same as usual. The Fiennes, Barclay-Helmonts, Major Downes and Jack Whitehead. Miss St. John comes to-morrow, so you'll be all right," and she laughed a little.

"Nonsense," she replied frankly when he demurred. "Muriel St. John's a very nice girl and she has a sensible little income. You'll have to marry some day, and you couldn't do better. I'm going to help her bring it off."

"Then I shall drink to your complete discomfiture."

"Nonsense, what's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, only I have an old-fashioned fancy for choosing my own wife, if I have one, and I fail to see the necessity."

"Better for you. Keep you straight and save you from breaking other girls' hearts. Steady, Trilby, steady," as the mare pricked up her ears and swerved, "can't you see it's only a heap of stones?"

"I consider that I deserve another five years freedom at least. I was only thirty last Sunday," remarked her companion. "Let's marry Miss St. John to the Major."

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"Let me take the reins," said the Captain.

"When I left, the gallant Major was worshipping Chris in the billiard room. She looked a trifle bored certainly, but he's good for five thousand a year, and a Kerr-Seton cannot afford to snap her fingers at that. Certainly a Chris Kerr-Seton can't."

"And what about a 'Rita'?"

"Rita is not extravagant. She can do with two dresses a year if she's got two decent horses and a roof to sleep under."

"How's Phil?" was the seemingly irrelevant question.

"All right. He's on the Riviera."

"Is he coming home soon?"

"In a few weeks. There's Chris and the Major looking out for us. I really believe she is in earnest this time. Perhaps she's tired of flirting."

"Very likely. Hullo, how are you?" he called, saluting the pair. "Prepare for a fervent song of thanksgiving as soon as I'm out of this. My hands are stiff with hanging on, but I didn't want to damp your Easter. Why doesn't Rita drive kangaroos if she likes excitement and vigorous, unlooked for jerks?"

"You poor thing, how you must have suffered," laughed Chris, "Trilby wasn't out yesterday so I can imagine it was pretty bad. You're awfully late. I was just going up to dress without waiting any longer. Everyone else has gone ages ago."

"Do you give the Major a class to himself already," asked Hollis chaffingly. "The rest of the world and Major Downes, eh?"

"And Jack Hollis thrown in as an after-thought," was the bright retort. "Let go my hand, I must tear off to dress. First impressions go a long way you know, and he's never seen me in evening dress yet," wickedly, "I'm going to flash upon him suddenly in all my glory, and while he's still gasping for breath, precipitate the fatal moment."

"I shall be there to see the unqualified surrender."

"You'd better not," threateningly, as she flew off.

Rita meanwhile was looking at her horse's mouth, and Hollis joined her. "What's wrong?" he said, and it was noticeable that his voice and manner changed.

"I'm not sure, but she's got something the matter. Either it's toothache or inflammation. I must see Grange after dinner."

"Let me see him for you."

"You can come with me if you like, but I always attend to anything connected with Trilby myself."

When the gentlemen joined the ladies after dinner, he looked round quickly and was not surprised to find her absent. He had hardly expected her to wait for him, and made his way at once through a conservatory and across the lawn towards the stables. He found her in the harness room, deep in an earnest colloquy with the head groom.

She wore a long dark cloak over her evening dress, but little white slippers showed below it, and Hollis wished she would take better care of herself,

She turned slightly when he joined them, but finished what she was saying to the groom before she remarked to him:

"I shan't be able to use Trilby for a day or two, isn't it a nuisance? Grange thinks her mouth is very bad."

"Really?" he said commiseratingly, but at the same time breathing an inward thanksgiving. For Hollis spent most of his time with Rita when he was at the Hall, and he had vivid recollections of how Trilby engrossed nearly all her attention when they were out with her.

"You will take cold it those thin slippers," he said as they returned. "Did you know it had been snowing?"

"No, but I never take cold. It feels almost like freezing, doesn't it? What a nuisance if it spoils the hunting."

When they reached the conservatory he contrived to detain her a little among the flowers.

It was a bright moonlight night, and her face showed clear and white against the dark background.

Hollis had his back to the light, so he could look upon her beauty unrestrainedly. For Rita had always been beautiful to Jack Hollis, whatever she had been to others. He liked her small, clear-cut features, the neat bands of dark hair bound close to her shapely head and her quiet eyes. She was not at all fashionable or stylish, but in every detail she was aristocratic to her finger-tips, and she was the one woman in the world for Jack Hollis. Yet she had been engaged to his cousin Philip Brindley for three years.

"Don't you admire our chrysanthemums?" she remarked, turning her head slightly. "We have a new gardener; it is the finest show we've ever had. It seems quite strange without old Bilson," she added, "I should think he had been here ever since you first came."

"Yes, I shall quite miss him. We always had a chat. It must be ten years this Easter since that first visit of mine." Hollis changed his tone a little, and looked hard into her face. "Ten years is a long time," he added quietly,

Rita turned her eyes to his with interest. "Is it really as much as that?" she said. "How time does fly. And you have been every Easter since," musingly.

"Every single one."

"They have been very jolly."

"They have indeed. None of my visits here during

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the year have quite the same charm as my anniversary Easter one. But it can't go on, that is the worst of it."

"Why not?" unguardedly, "you will always have the same welcome."

He bit his lip and contracted his forehead a little.

"There will be changes," he said.

She was silent, and a curious expression, half-regretful flitted across her eyes. A pause followed, then he said:

"Are you and Phil going to be married this year?"

"Yes. Most likely in May."

"So soon?" and his voice almost betrayed him.

"There is nothing to wait for."

He fidgeted half-nervously with his watch chain. She seemed to have grown a little paler, and to carefully hide her eyes from him.

She had always known that for some reason he did not approve of her *fiancé*.

"I had no idea the day was so near," he said at last, "I am sorry."

Her eyes grew a little strained.

"You don't understand, Phil," she remarked. "He always hides his best self."

"I think I do," he answered, "We were at Eton together, and afterwards at Sandhurst. I know he is a good fellow at heart, but——" he hesitated.

"Go on," she said.

"He is so weak."

"I know it but, I am strong. He has always relied very much upon me."

"That is just it. When a marriage is a really happy one, the woman relies upon the man. It is splendid for Phil to have you, but it is you I think about. I have always hoped to hear that you had changed your mind."

"You won't hear that," very quietly. "I have given him my promise. I shall stick to him now."

"But you gave it in a moment of extreme need and stress. It is not quite the same."

"A promise is always a promise."

"A true man would not have taken such an unfair advantage."

He spoke daringly, but he realised it might be the last chance, and braved her resentment. He knew so much better than she did, perhaps better than anyone, just how weak Philip Brindley was. A man of brilliant genius, spoilt by early success and adulation. He had often wanted to tell her, but a feeling of unfairness tied his tongue. If only he had not loved her himself. As it was he could only hint vaguely, and hoped that some unlooked for circumstance would break the engagement. And meanwhile he had been looking after Philip himself, and keeping him clear of bad companions at considerable cost of time and patience. But it was a long time before Rita ever heard of all he had done for her sake.

"It was not an unfair advantage," she replied to his charge, "I was a perfectly free agent."

She tried to speak firmly, but her heart seemed to rise up against her words as if to give them the lie. She remembered the darkened room and the mother's drawn, white face; the heavy atmosphere and the sick man's passionate intreaties. She had always been fond of him and looked after him; now that he was dying she could not turn from him and so his earnestness prevailed.

She had promised to be his wife if he got well.

"He did not mean it as such," Hollis continued, "I only know the news was a shock to everyone."

She made no sign, and he drew a step nearer.

"We are old friends, Rita, such old friends, you will forgive me a little plain-speaking, I know. Can you honestly assure me that your engagement has never been a disappointment to you? Are you certain you love Phil as well as you could love anyone?"

She shrank away with a half-appealing gesture, for his earnestness unnerved her.

Her face showed clear and white against the dark background.

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"Look at me, Rita," he urged, "and assure me that I am wrong."

She raised her eyes bravely and opened her lips to speak. But the words died away unuttered; she looked at him helplessly for a moment and then turned with a quick movement to the door.

"I have promised to be Philip's wife," she said in a low voice. "I believe people call me horsey and masculine. I don't know whether they are right or not, but at least you can allow me a man's sense of honour."

* * * * *

On Easter Tuesday the Hall party attended a village concert, and afterwards prepared to walk home, preferring the moonlit loveliness of the night to the stuffy broughams. Jack contrived to walk with Rita, and as Chris passed them, she called, laughingly:

"Jack wants shaking or jumping on, or something, Rita. He's been a wet blanket all the evening. Give it him well, and don't let him off until he promises to propose to Muriel to-morrow."

She herself had become engaged to Major Downes the previous evening, and now that it was settled she felt very pleased and happy, and magnanimous to the world at large. Rita smiled, but said nothing, and she and Jack followed the rest of the gaily laughing throng. Only they were very quiet and very thoughtful, not at all like the others.

"I think it has been a success," Rita said at last, to break the constrained silence. "Everyone seems to have enjoyed it."

"I'm sure they have," he answered readily, "the programme did you great credit."

She laughed a little.

"You lie too easily, Jack," she said, "I know someone who looked and was insufferably bored."

"Well, I don't count myself," he replied. "I went because you asked me to, and I should do just the same again. The audience generally looked very placid and satisfied."

"You shouldn't have sat yourself down with only Mrs. Ingram for a neighbour."

"I found her rather amusing. She was very concerned because the Vicar's dear 'ead began to show so bald without his 'at on."

"There was an empty chair beside Muriel all the evening," she said, meaningly.

"I should have thought you would have been the last, Rita, to incite a man to profess for anyone what he did not feel," he said seriously.

"Do you think you could fall in love?" she asked.

"I don't think I ever shall," he replied evasively.

"I expect you haven't met the right woman yet," with a little smile.

He was silent for a few minutes, then he said in his usual calm way.

"Yes I have; I met her some years ago."

"Oh Jack," sympathetically.

"I don't know that she ever cared for me," he continued, "but she might have done later on, if not then. You see things went wrong. It does happen so, and then one has to make the best of it."

"I'm awfully sorry," in the same sympathetic voice. "Is it quite hopeless?"

"Quite. I went to her home to ask her, and the evening before I arrived she got engaged to someone else. If I had gone twenty-four hours earlier, it might have all altered the whole of her life and mine. Curious isn't it, how a trifle may make or mar anyone's life? I had intended to go two days earlier, and only waited to oblige a pal about something."

"But how strange, Jack—surely if she cared for you?"

"I don't suppose she did; she didn't really love the other man, and it would have given me a chance. Still, it might not have made any difference, and, anyhow, it's all over now. I only told you because of what you said about my marrying. She wasn't quite like other girls, you see, and I think she spoilt me for the rest."

He changed the subject then, and talked about the trip in the Mediterranean he and Will Fiennes were starting upon the next day; but Rita thought many times of what he had told her.

* * * * *

Jack was smoking in the conservatory the next morning, when Chris came upon him with rather an anxious expression.

"Have you seen Rita?" she asked, after glancing round to make sure they were alone.

"No, why? Is there anything the matter?"

"Phil has had an accident, but there's

Jack contrived to walk with Rita.

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something else as well. She looks dreadfully worried."

"Where is she?"

"In the library alone. Pretend you want a book."

He found her sitting over the fire with a newspaper on her knee, but she was not even pretending to read it.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

Rita looked at him in surprise and was about to prevaricate, but something in his manner disarmed her, and she looked away to the fire, with the troubled expression deepening in her face. He waited for her to speak.

"I don't think I ought to worry you with it," she said at last, wearily.

"You would be doing me a good turn," he answered, "supposing I were able to help you in any way."

"And if not?"

"Let me try."

"It's about Phil."

He looked at her keenly.

"Yes?" he said questioningly.

"I'm afraid he's been wild again. He's had an accident, and though he doesn't exactly say so, I can guess it was through drinking. He writes very penitently and says I must give him up, because it is only what he deserves. I don't know what to do; I'm almost at my wits' end."

"Why don't you speak to your father about it?" he said, after a pause.

"Because he'd insist upon my breaking it off at once, and I'm not sure that I want to do that. Jack," suddenly, relaxing into an unusual show of warmth and earnestness, "I haven't done much in my life—it's such a poor tale at best—don't you think it would be worth something to keep Phil straight?"

"But supposing you fail?"

"I shouldn't when we were together always, I never have yet."

He got up and moved away restlessly.

"You can't possibly tell," he said. "It's a fearful risk. Personally I—I—no," hastily, "it's not for me to advise you. You must know what I think already."

She was silent.

"I will do anything I can to help you," he continued hurriedly, "if you are determined to let things go on as they are. Shall I look Phil up and see if I can make sure of anything?"

"Oh, would you?" eagerly. "It's an awful shame to let you, but I should be so glad to know definitely what is wrong."

"I can try and find out for you. Did you say he was at Monte Carlo?"

"Yes."

"Am I to give him any message?"

"Nothing special, but if he's very ill and wants me, let me know. I might be able to come out to him."

He turned to go, but his face was very white and set.

"You are a brick, Jack," she said gratefully. "I shan't worry nearly so much now."

He did not answer, but took out his watch.

"I must hurry," he said, "I haven't packed yet. I'll let you know all I can."

Half-an-hour later, a dog-cart bearing the two men to the station drove out at the park gates, but Rita was still sitting alone in the library, pretending to read.

At last she got up.

"No, I won't fail him now," she said resolutely, and went to get into her riding-habit for a solitary canter.

"I wonder who it was Jack cared for," she mused as she rode home. "I used to think it was Chris, but it couldn't have been."

Rita was sitting alone in the library.

Her eyes grew very wistful. She was thinking how she used to wish it might have been her.

* * * * *

"I am very glad. He wasn't half good enough for you," and Chris spoke with her usual decision.

There was no doubt she had quite made up her mind on the subject.

Rita said nothing, but stood looking fixedly at the letter in her hand. It stated clearly that her *fiancé* wished to break off their engagement.

The reasons were a trifle vague, but the purport was undeniable.

"Now you'll be able to marry Jack," Chris continued, coolly. "I know he's in love with you. I'm just as glad as ever I can be."

Rita did not heed her; she scarcely seemed to hear at all. Her face was deadly pale and a light of subdued anger burned in her eyes, but she still said nothing. Instead, she turned away.

She wanted to be alone to face the whole matter and make something of the confusion in her mind, where wounded pride struggled with a half formed sense of relief.

A week later came Jack's letter and one sentence ran:

"You were the woman I told you I had loved so hopelessly. I may tell you now, freely, thank Heaven for that, even though it may make no difference. I cannot remember the time when I knew you and did not love you, only Fate has seemed against me all along. But I have fresh hope now. I shall return home quickly, and when I get back we can perhaps start over again."

When she had read it she heaved a long sigh of gladness.

"If I had only known," she breathed, "but it will be all right now it will be all right now."

GERTRUDE PAGE.

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A MIDNIGHT RIDE.

I CALLED upon Marston Moore one evening—it was in September, 1888—and quite to my surprise found him in deep dejection. He was a young physician of three or four years' practice, but without a care in the world that I had ever heard of. Certainly he had no occasion to worry about ordinary things, for his banking account was among the many thousands.

Nevertheless, he was despondent, and when I endeavoured to laugh him out of the condition he became only more morose. His manner was so brusque and his replies so monosyllabic that at last I took offence and rose to depart. It was then that he detained me.

"Pardon me, old chap," he said with more cordiality than he had yet manifested, "the fact is I'm in trouble. Somebody has got to help me out, and I don't know which way to turn. It is almost too much to ask of any friend."

I dropped back into my chair reassured, and after a moment of silence asked as gently as I could:

"How much is it, Marston?"

He looked up quickly, and there was a puzzled expression on his face; then he laughed, but it was a mirthless laugh after all.

"It isn't that," he said presently. "I wish it were. Do you think that I would have hesitated to apply to you if it were a question of money? No, that is the least of my worries. It is something of far more importance than that. It is—but I cannot put you to such a severe test of friendship, old fellow."

"Come, come," I exclaimed, my curiosity aroused, and also resenting the idea that he should consider any test of my friendship for him too great for me to stand. "If there is anything in the world that I can do for you, Marston, you well know that I will be only too glad to do it. Out with it now; what is the matter?"

"I cannot tell you all of the horrible story," he replied with marked hesitation. "If you are willing to go with me you will have to wait until we arrive before you hear all there is to tell."

"Arrive where?" I demanded.

"That also is out of my power to state," he responded, "for I do not yet know myself."

Then he sprang from his chair, and with rapid strides crossed and recrossed the room several times, at last pausing directly in front of me, with feet wide apart and hands thrust deep into his trousers' pockets. For a moment he regarded me with a gaze so intense that involuntarily I turned my eyes away. It was then that he continued:

"Look here, Ferguson," he said, "if you really mean that you will stand by me through this thing you will have to go into it blindly. It is not that I lack confidence in you that I do not tell—you know that, or should—it is because now I cannot be more explicit."

"All right, I'll go into it blindly, then," I said, trying to laugh and making a miserable failure of it. "You would do it for me if the positions were reversed."

"I am not so sure of that, knowing what I do," he half soliloquised. "It's a great deal to ask of any man, especially one's best friend. No, Ferguson, I do not think that I should accept your offer. I'll see the thing through alone, let the consequences be what they may."

"I'll be blowed if you will," I ejaculated, getting upon my feet also, and facing him where he stood. "If you are going into any danger where I can be of service, or where I can help see you through, I'm going to do it. I don't care a rap what it is. You needn't say another word, now or ever, if you don't want to, but go with you I will; and if you still refuse, so help me, I'll trump up some charge and have you arrested so that you cannot go yourself. Now, don't have any more words about it, but tell me at once what I am to do."

"You're a trump, too, Ferguson!" he exclaimed, seizing me by the hand and shaking it heartily, and I noticed that his eyes brightened perceptibly as he did so. "It is worth while having such a friend as you are in an extremity like this one, and I will take you at your word. All that I can now say is this: I must leave here to-night at midnight, and I have an appointment to keep beyond the city limits; but the exact location of the place where I am to meet the parties who expect me has not yet been fixed upon. In fact, I will not know about it until shortly before the time to start. We will have to go on horseback, and goodness alone knows when we will return, if we ever do. Are you still determined to accompany me?"

"More than ever."

"Very well. Meet me, then, at Turner's stables exactly at twelve o'clock to-night. I will have two good horses in readiness. See that you are well armed, Ferguson. A pair of 'forty-fours' may come in handy before we see the sun of another day—if we are fortunate enough ever to do so."

I clasped his hand silently, and in silence left him. I was greatly perturbed about the affair, for I could not even guess at the meaning of his strange words and manner. I had known Moore since my first year at college, and our friendship had never faltered since that time, now twelve years, nor had I ever known him to get into a serious scrape. Of the two, I was more prone to that sort of thing.

It was barely eight o'clock when I left Moore, so that I had four hours in which to make my preparations for the midnight ride. This I did, first by writing several letters and inclosing them in a big envelope, which I placed conspicuously on the mantel in my bedroom, marked: "To be opened and directions followed in case I have not returned at eight o'clock to-morrow evening." Then I dated it, so there might be no mistake. After that I dressed myself in my riding suit and boots, buckled my cartridge belt and revolvers round my body, and I was ready.

It was then only eleven o'clock, and I passed the

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intervening time in writing more letters, for Moore's seriousness had impressed me strongly, and although I could not even conjecture what might happen, I was thoroughly imbued with the idea that the experiences of the night were not to be child's play. In that I was correct.

When the clock struck twelve I entered the stable. Moore was awaiting me, impatiently slashing his boots with his riding whip.

"You are a quarter of an hour late, Ferguson."

"It is exactly twelve," I responded in astonishment, producing my watch in proof of the statement. "I am here to the minute."

"Are you?" ironically. "I thought I said at a quarter to twelve."

"No, you said 'exactly at twelve.' Those are your own words."

"Well, never mind, you are here now, anyway," and he swung himself into the saddle, struck his horse a smart clip with the whip, and dashed into the darkness.

I was after him in a moment, but did not overtake him for some time, when he drew rein, and waited for me.

"We turn here," he said briefly, and led the way along the thoroughfare towards the river valley. I endeavoured to get near enough to converse with him, but for some reason I could not succeed. Either his horse was unusually fractious, or surreptitiously Moore kept him excited with the spur.

All the way to the river he kept a little ahead of me, and quite to one side, so that there was no opportunity for conversation. Down at the very bottom he halted, and for the first time seemed disposed to talk.

"We turn south here, Ferguson," he said, "and we will have to pick our way. It is rather dark, but I think I can find the place."

"Then you know now where you are going?" I asked.

"Yes. There is an old house a mile or so below here. I am going there. Are your pistols all right?"

"Yes," I replied.

"There is an old railway siding somewhere here. It has been abandoned for years, but if I can locate it we can follow along the top of it. It will be easier than forcing our way through the woods. Keep your eyes open now, and look out that you are not brushed off your horse by a low hanging branch; and above all, Ferguson, don't talk. Let us move along as silently as possible."

He led the way, and I followed, although as we dived deeper into the woods it soon became difficult to see him; but I knew that my horse would follow his unerringly, so I abandoned the effort to guide him.

It seemed to me that we travelled in that manner more than an hour, though I now know it was not so long by far; then we turned down the bank of the old siding, crossed a swampy stretch where the grass grew so high that it caught in my spurs, and presently began the ascent of a steep though short hill, and at the top emerged from the woods, but found ourselves at the margin of a wilderness of bushes that were not quite so high as our heads as we sat upon our horses.

Coming from the gloom of the woods behind us, the starlit sky—there was no moon—made it seem quite light. Before us, three or four hundred feet away, dark, gloomy, and forbidding, loomed the outlines of a house, and for some reason the aspect of the whole thing sent an involuntary shudder through me.

While I was intently regarding the house, Moore dismounted, and having unbuckled one side of the bridle rein and thus made a halter of it, he tied his horse to a tree.

"We will have to leave the horses here, Ferguson," he said. "What we have to do now must be done on foot. Tie your animal and follow me."

I acted as hastily as I could, but Moore was already several paces in advance. Still, I hastened to overtake him.

"Don't you think you had better post me a little now, Marston?" I managed to whisper, but the only reply I received was a sharp "Hist!" and somewhat offended I went on after that, silently and doggedly, resolved that I would not ask another question no matter what happened.

As we drew nearer to the house I saw that we were behind it. There was no sign of life visible. Indeed, from appearances, I decided that the place had been deserted a long time, perhaps years. Moore, however, seemed to know where he was going, and he led me by a detour round the house, so that we finally approached it from the front.

Just before we stepped from the concealment of the bushes to approach the door, I felt my friend's hand upon my arm, and heard him whisper, very low: "Follow me closely, and do exactly as I say. A great deal—our safety—may depend upon it." Then he went ahead.

We stepped upon the rickety porch as silently as we could, but despite our efforts it creaked dismally beneath our combined weight. Then, to my surprise, Moore, with the butt of one of his pistols, hammered loudly upon one of the panels of the door. After the silence that had preceded his act, it seemed to my strained senses as if the noise made by the knocking might have been heard a mile away.

Notwithstanding that fact, there was no immediate response, and presently Moore hammered again, this time louder than before, and the summons had to be repeated the third time before there was anything like a response. Then, from beyond the door, a masculine voice inquired:

"Who is there?"

"Marston Moore," replied my companion in a loud tone.

"Alone?" was the second query.

"No, accompanied by a friend."

There followed a moment of silence, and then the voice beyond the door said:

"Why didn't you come alone as you were told to do? There isn't any room for strangers here; you know that."

I thought I heard Moore swear under his breath, but I was not sure; and then, in a tone which there was no mistaking, he shouted:

"Open that door, Madgley, or I'll kick it in, and it won't be a difficult thing to do, either. Open it, and open it quick!"

There was another short interval of silence, and then, rather to my surprise, the door swung slowly back on its hinges, leaving a space of impenetrable blackness in its place. There was not a sign of a human being to be seen. The man who had spoken to us from behind the door had disappeared—or, rather, he did not appear at all.

Moore immediately passed through the aperture into the darkness, and disappeared, but a second later I heard his voice.

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"Come on, Ferguson," he said; "it's all right."

I followed without hesitation, but I had scarcely passed the threshold when strong arms seized and pinioned me from behind, a blanket was thrown over my head, and before I could do anything to resist the attack, I was dragged to the floor, and by many hands held helpless while others bound me. Notwithstanding the struggle in which I was engaged I was conscious that there was another one near me, and I believed that Moore had been attacked in the same manner.

"Fools that we were," I thought, "to enter that dark corridor as we had done without first taking precautions to avoid exactly the thing that had happened."

I called aloud to Moore, but received no reply. Except for the deep breathing of the men near me the silence was absolute.

As soon as I was bound so that there was no chance for me to escape, my captors raised me from the floor and bore me away. I knew that they carried me to the second floor of the building, and presently I was taken into a large room where there was a fire, and in the dim light I could see that the men who had assaulted me were garbed in the livery of a secret society known as "white caps."

I realised that there would be little or no use in asking questions, and remained silent; neither did one of my captors utter a word. I looked round as well as I could for some sign of Moore, but he was not there, and if he was I could not see him.

They placed me upon my back on the floor, and the next instant a thick handkerchief of black silk was bandaged round my head, effectually blindfolding me. A moment later I heard them leave the room, and I knew that I was alone.

Nearly an hour passed before I again heard a sound, and then it was the stealthy tread of many feet passing near me, until it seemed to my strange sense of hearing as if I was in the centre of a group that had formed round me. Then I was startled by a voice saying:

"Mr. Albert Ferguson, you may thank yourself alone for the inconvenience to which we have been compelled to put you. We had reasons for desiring the presence of your companion, but we have nothing to do with your affairs. If you are willing to return as you came, and to pledge yourself to absolute secrecy regarding all that has happened to-night, there is no reason why we should detain you."

"Where is Moore?" I demanded. "Certainly, I am willing to do all you ask, but you must remember that I came here with Marston Moore. If I returned as I came, I return with him."

"In this case you will have to return without him," was the stern reply.

"Then I'll give you no pledge of secrecy, and you know that I would not keep it if I made one."

"This is a serious matter, Mr. Ferguson. You had better think twice before you decide. Our business with Moore is our own affair and his. He knew what he had to expect before he came here, and he know also just what dangers threatened you if he brought you with him. He acted the part of a coward in doing so, and if you will heed good advice you will have nothing more to do with him."

"What have you done with him?" was all the reply I made.

"We have done with him just exactly as we now propose to do with you, for I see that you are incorrigible. Pick him up, boys. It is a waste of breath to argue with him."

If I should attempt to describe the experiences through which I passed during the ensuing hour and a half, credulity would be taxed to the utmost, but it is certain that every ruse which the ingenuity of the human mind could conceive was forced upon me to induce me in some way to desert Moore or to deny him.

As the ceremony progressed—and before the proceedings had occupied above an hour I had decided that it was a ceremony of some kind—it dawned upon me, dimly at first, and then with the force of certainty, that I was undergoing some sort of initiation. What it was I could not determine. The real truth did not once occur to me.

At last, with the bandage still over my eyes, I heard these words:

"My friend"—and the voice startled me, for I fancied that I recognised it—"it is with unmixed pleasure that I announce the completion of your trials and suffering. You have been tried in the balance and have not been found wanting in the virtues which we require of all candidates. Whoever enters here must possess all the qualities which are expressed by the word 'friend,' which is the most abused and traduced word in our language.

"Throughout all the tests that have been applied to you you have been steadfast, loyal, and true. What more can one friend ask of another? You were willing, at the request of Mr. Moore, to go blindly into unknown dangers, content to await an explanation until he chose to grant one, and you have found here many who stand ready at any moment to perform the same service for you.

"And now, after some further initiation and instruction, you will have become a member of the most secret order in the world—and the most magnificent. Even its true name is never mentioned—never uttered aloud. Mr. Moore will remove the bandage from your eyes and cut the cords that bind you. After he has craved your pardon for the imposition he has practised upon you, you will be instructed in the mysteries of this sacred order."

That is all. I wish I might tell the rest, but I cannot.

Frederic Van Rensselaer Dey.

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Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXVII.—HIS NATURAL PHILOSOPHY DIDN'T WORK TILL HE CALLED IN A TRAMP.

THAT Mr. Bowser had something on his mind the other evening was plainly evident to Mrs. Bowser, and for an hour she was in doubt as to whether he had bought the patent rights of a washing machine or had taken a half interest in a patent hay fork. After dinner he condescended to explain.

"Mrs. Bowser," he began in a paternal way, "a woman is never expected to know much, and you never hear me complain of your ignorance, but there are some few things I wish you would post yourself about. I presume you have never given a thought to natural philosophy, and yet you would find it a most interesting study."

"I think I know a good deal about natural philosophy," she quietly replied.

"Then I have never discovered it. The other day I saw you poke the handle of the carpet-sweeper through a pane of glass. Natural philosophy should have taught you that when a stick of hard ash comes in contact with a window the pane must be shivered. A few nights ago it was so hot that you removed the blankets from our bed. Last night we had a cold wave, and I was nearly frozen. Natural philosophy should have taught you that the weather does not always remain the same. Do you follow me?"

"Yes. You put a table napkin in your pocket the other morning for a handkerchief, and as a natural philosophical result when you pulled it out on the crowded 'bus there was a general grin at your expense. I think I understand."

"And I think you don't," he exclaimed as he flushed up. "There's a heap of difference between absence of mind and natural philosophy, and I don't suppose you will ever be able to separate them. Perhaps, however, you know why we put ice into the top of the refrigerator instead of the bottom."

"Because cold air descends," she replied.

"That is correct, Mrs. Bowser, and I give you full credit. Perhaps you also know that hot air ascends and that the warmest place in this room at present is next the ceiling."

"Certainly."

"That is well, and we will proceed further. There sits the cat under the piano. If the front door should open and a dog came trotting in here, what would be the result? What does natural philosophy teach you would happen?"

"There would be no natural philosophy about it. The natural antagonism existing between the canine and feline races would result in a fight between the dog and the cat."

"It would be natural philosophy, Mrs. Bowser."

"I think it would be natural antagonism."

"There you go! I might have known your natural obstinacy would lead you to dispute me. Suppose I found the cat on the piano and gave her a cuff. In obeying the laws of natural philosophy where would she go to?"

"In obeying the laws of gravity she would reach the floor."

"What's gravity got to do with this question?" he shouted.

"Gravity has a lot to do. If it wasn't for the laws of gravity, the cat would fly up to the ceiling when you cuffed her."

"I deny it. In your ignorance and obstinacy you are determined to ridicule the question. Very well, Mrs. Bowser. It is useless to waste further time on you. I

He gave her a lift.

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shall be much disappointed if I find that the cook is as ignorant as you are. I am going down to the kitchen. What will natural philosophy prompt the cat to do?"

"As she is probably hungry her natural instincts will prompt her to follow you and yeowl round until you give her some of that cold mutton."

Mr. Bowser paused in the door to glare at her and extend his right arm with dramatic gesture, but he was too cross to reply in words. The cat followed him down stairs from natural instincts, and natural philosophy should have proved to him that she was hungry for meat. It didn't, however. When he found her at his heels, he gave her a lift with the toe of his shoe, and as the law of gravitation brought her to the floor she made haste to hide under the sideboard. Proceeding to the kitchen, Mr. Bowser found the cook washing dishes, and he began:

"I desire to talk to you for a minute. You have in your hand a jug. If you knock it against the iron sink, it will be broken, but why will it be broken?"

"I lived in my last place seven years and never even broke a tea-cup," answered the girl in tones of defence.

"Very likely, but I want you to see the philosophy of things. Which is the harder, iron or crockery?"

"Is the missus complaining of my cooking, sir?"

"No, no. Your cooking is all right. Let us take another case. There is a kettle of boiling water on the stove. Let it boil for an hour, and you will find the quantity considerably less, but where has the water gone to?"

"And is this a house where a girl has to pay for boiling water?" asked the girl as she turned on him.

"No, of course not. Can't you understand that I am asking you questions in natural philosophy?"

"I never heard of it, sir."

"Well, why do you build a fire under your pots and kettles?"

"And are you going to complain that I use too much coal? I'm here on a week's trial, but if I've got to be found fault with by the man of the house I'll leave this very night. Why don't the missus come down if there is anything wrong?"

Mr. Bowser gave it up and left the kitchen. He had thought the cook would grasp his natural philosophy at once, but she appeared to be more dense than Mrs. Bowser. He didn't want to go up stairs at once and admit his failure and was hanging about the dining room for a minute, when the area bell rang, and he took it upon himself to answer it. There was a man at the door, and though taken somewhat aback, he asked for money for a night's lodging.

"Come in and I'll see about it," replied Mr. Bowser as he congratulated himself on finding someone who could understand him.

"I'm a hard-working man, sir," explained the caller as he took a seat, "but I'm out of a job and hungry and stony broke."

"In other words it's a case of natural philosophy," chuckled Mr. Bowser. "Having no work you have no money. Having no money, you cannot buy a dinner or a night's lodging."

"That's it exactly, sir. I never heard the case stated so beautifully in all my life."

"I'm glad you understand. Natural philosophy teaches us that we must consume a certain amount of food if we would maintain our health."

"It do, sir."

"You observe before you a table. It is barren of eatables just now, but what does natural philosophy teach us?"

"I'm a hard-working man, sir," explained the caller.

"That it will presently be covered with cold wittles for my benefit."

"Exactly, my man. You know more than my wife and the cook put together. You want sixpence to secure a bed. If you get sixpence——"

"I will get a bed."

"And if not?"

"I'll get the collar from a cop for wandering about the streets."

"Couldn't be better!" chuckled Mr. Bowser. "I'll go upstairs and get you a sixpence, and you shall have something to break your fast, and we will resume the conversation."

They didn't, however. When Mr. Bowser returned with the sixpence, the tramp was no longer in the dining-room, and the area door was open. Mrs. Bowser came down before his absence could be commented upon, and, pointing to the sideboard, she said:

"There are four pieces of silver gone off that board!"

"By thunder, it is so!" exclaimed Mr. Bowser.

"Where's your tramp?"

"G-gone."

"And the silver with him! I thought you wanted to teach me natural philosophy."

And all Mr. Bowser could do was to fall into a chair and stare helplessly at an old bandana handkerchief the tramp had left on the floor.

M. Quad.

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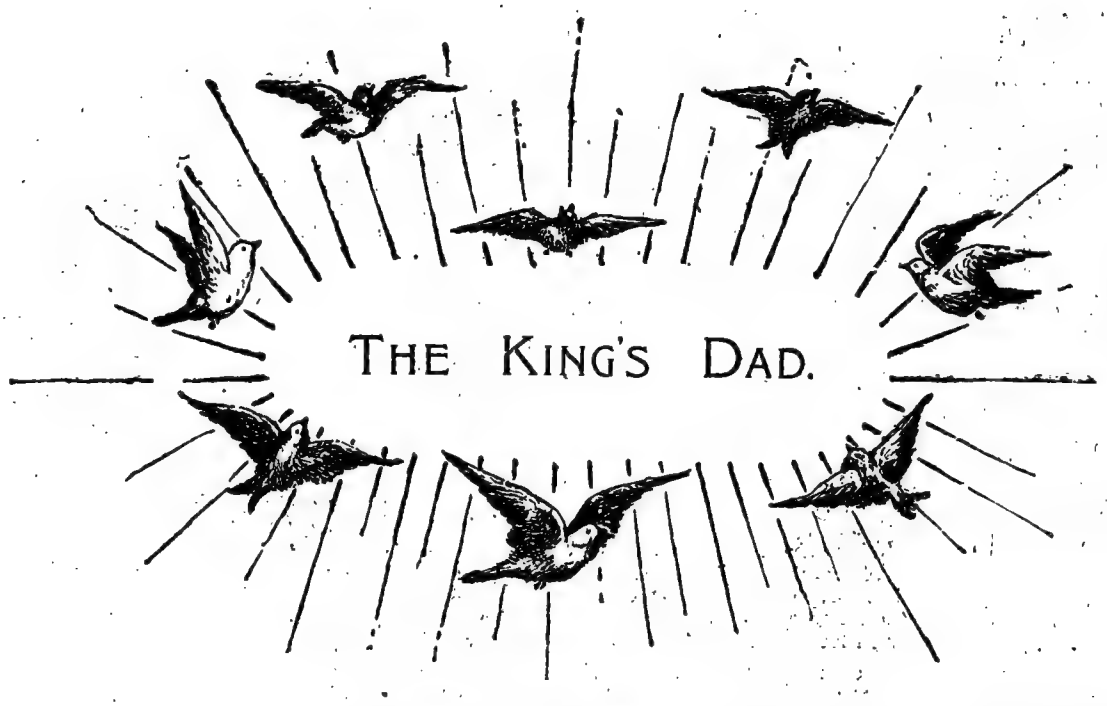

THE KING'S DAD.

THE day was a fine one, and as I sat by the side of the "old man garrulous," and looked out over the sun-flecked river reach, up toward London and then down to the sea, I thought the lot of the old master mariner to be indeed cast in a pleasant place.

Belvedere, near Erith, seems an ideal spot for the day's decline of such as he. Breezy, open as it is, the silent highway is ever before him, with its moving panorama of departing and returning vessels.

This was my second visit to old Peter Mullins, ex-skipper of a trading schooner, and, in his younger days, a foremast hand on a small brig, cruising with the same object in the South Seas.

The old man was evidently nearing the end of life's voyage, and was as evidently desirous of unburdening his mind of something which appeared to trouble him.

Why he should have selected me as his father-confessor I hardly know, except, perhaps, that on the former occasion, I had constituted myself a good listener, a qualification nearly always with some people provocative of confidence.

I will, however, let him tell his story in his own way.

* * * * *

"Come closer, so as I can see ye, and so as ye can hear my voice. For sight's a-failing and breath is short with me now. But the spirit! the spirit's all right! Ay! if it wasn't for that old Pete Mullins would have foundered long ago.

"It was in the early sixties, nigh forty year ago, when I shipped as A.B. in the *Fortune*, brig.

"We were bound for Tahiti first, in the South Seas, and then for a general trading cruise among the Islands. It was a part of the world that was 'Greek' to me. My trips up to that time had been east; Mediterranean, through the Canal, and then to Bombay or Calcutta. But I suppose this was meant to be. Fate's a ticklish varmint, mate; she measures ye, fits ye, and whether ye like 'em or not ye've got to wear the duds.

"Well, we sailed, and all the way up Channel a dead head wind was our starting luck. But it soon changed when we got outside, and good weather was the word till we made the 'Islands.'

"We sighted the first of 'em just as the sun was setting. With the morning, the skipper decided, we being many miles from Tahiti, to commence commercial operations where we were.

"The *Fortune* was lying 'off and on' just outside the veriest paradise man's eyes ever were, or ever could be, set on.

"A coral-formed bulwark; inside it a waveless pool, or lagoon, completely surrounding the atoll. A fringe of cocoa-palm; a clump of the same in the centre of the island, just gave that touch of green to the picture that made it so lovely thereabouts. I was that excited to get ashore, that when the skipper ordered out a boat I managed to secure an oar.

"'Mind, boys,' shouted the old man after us, 'no sky-larking! The creatures' ways are kind'er unpleasant for them as plays a game with their heathen feelings!'

"'Aye, aye, sir!' sang out the bos'un, who was in charge of the expedition.

"But I just thought to myself that it were impossible for beings living in such a place to be anything but good descendants of old Adam at the very least.

"The nearer we got to the shore, the more I was enchanted. Fairyland it looked like, and I peered out to catch a glimpse of the fairy folk, who, I felt sure, must inhabit the island.

"And now something peculiar happened. Something I couldn't quite explain to myself powerfully attracted my attention. A pair of big, sparkling eyes it was I

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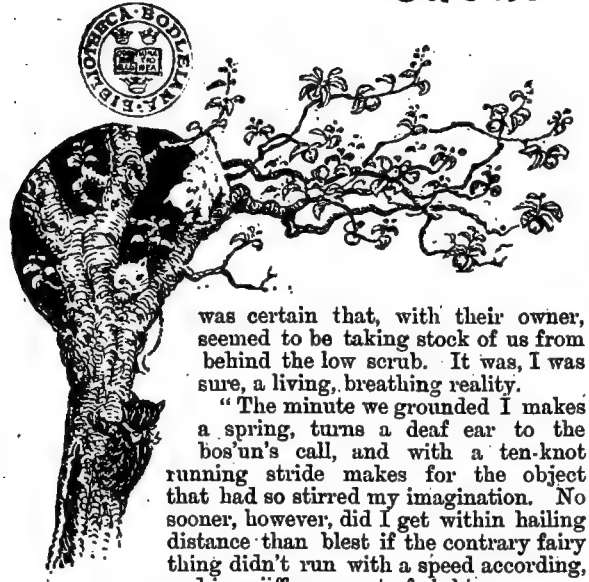
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was certain that, with their owner, seemed to be taking stock of us from behind the low scrub. It was, I was sure, a living, breathing reality.

"The minute we grounded I makes a spring, turns a deaf ear to the bos'un's call, and with a ten-knot running stride makes for the object that had so stirred my imagination. No sooner, however, did I get within hailing distance than blest if the contrary fairy thing didn't run with a speed according, and in a jiffy was out of sight.

"Wondering how I should get back to the boat, I turned to retrace my steps, when, without warning, I received a crashing blow on the back of my head which felled me to the ground.

"How long I lay unconscious I can't say, and it doesn't much matter, but when I did come to, I saw that I was surrounded by a mob of shrieking naked brown devils.

"They grinned and gibbered at me like demons when they saw me move a bit, and indicated in unpleasantly unmistakable fashion that my last hour had come.

"I'm no coward, never was one, that I know of. Storm, squall, or fine weather have always been alike to me. But I must confess in this case to a feeling of dread suspense. Any moment the deadly blow might fall. I shut my eyes, whispered to myself a fervent 'Amen' to a not very long life and—waited.

"Then, as if by magic, the howling and wrangling about me suddenly stopped, and I heard distinctly the clear, silvery ring of a woman's voice. What she was saying I could not make out, but evidently the speaker, whoever she might be, had influence of no mean sort with the savage rabble.

"Curious to solve the riddle, I opened my eyes. Surely the fairy idea was real—a beautiful, undeniable fact!

"Kneeling in tears beside me was a woman, a girl, young and sweet. Her face, daintily small and round, was of dusky hue, her hair jet black, while her tiny brown feet were as perfectly formed as those of my Lady Vere de Vere.

"But it was her eyes that held me, held me spellbound. Large and lustrous, they seemed to have in them the whole soul of their pretty owner. First did she turn them in tender compassion upon me, and then flash them in indignant command round upon the scowling crowd. Strangest and most curious thing of all, though, the girl, every now and then, would take my hand, and impulsively kiss it.

"This action of hers appeared greatly to impress the others, for at every repetition of it the latter showed more and more a disposition to relinquish their prey.

"The lingo they jabbered was double-dutch to me, while my own talk would have been just as incomprehensible to them. It was a difficulty certainly with regard to a proper mutual understanding.

"Then, suddenly, an idea appeared to strike the girl. Rising to her feet, she went through a sort of animated and eloquent pantomime.

"Being, I think, no fool, I contrived to gather by degrees the course she was steering.

"The natives were hostile to white intruders, that was clear. Then by a series of wonderfully expressive gestures she got me to see how that it was a custom with them, when a white man's doom was sealed, to accept a maiden's intercession, signified by the kissing by her of the victim's hand.

"One condition was attached, however, to the arrangement (and as she interpreted it a beautiful blush deepened the delicate brown of her cheek and throat), viz., that within seven days the respited one must take his preserver for better and for worse.

"This was indeed a startling situation.

"Still, I was practically alone in the world. Not a soul existed to care whether I lived or died. My shipmates had not attempted a rescue, so turning it all over in my mind, I decided to accept what I couldn't really help.

"The little creature by my side (she was very small), seemed somehow to know that I had so settled it, for with a wave of her wee brown hand she impatiently dismissed the niggers.

"When we were quite alone, I took a pointed stick, and stooping down, wrote in the sandy soil the words 'My wife.'

"Then, by signs and suchlike, I endeavoured to teach her their sound and meaning.

"By-and-by she seemed to grasp it, and clapped her little hands with delight.

"All that followed is to me now, as I sit here and look out upon the quiet waters of the old Thames, as a dream, a tale told so many years ago that every incident, every character is ghostly, indistinct, almost impossible.

"Briefly, for the story in all its details would take too long in the telling, we married.

"For some days the men of the place hid me from any search that might be organised by the *Fortune's* people.

"But none was made, at least I heard of none.

"It was after quiet had settled down, that I found out who it really was that I had married.

"My informant was a truculent, shifty-eyed native, by name Obishama. Himself with a sneaking affection, of a kind, for my Meta (I had so named her), he bid me, in a bumptious, superior sort of way, to beware how I treated my spouse, as she was a princess; the daughter, only child in fact, of Maramaha, the King of the island.

"A princess! and that she should marry me! This was, indeed, altogether out of my reckoning, and a truly queer state of affairs.

"However, considering whence it came, I took the news coolly, and as a matter of course; succeeding in disguising my astonishment.

"Obishama, expecting that I should be profoundly impressed, was consequently alike disappointed and puzzled at my indifference.

"'Very well,' I said. 'Then, if that's so, and my Meta is heiress-apparent, I must be in some sort a royal personage myself now. Don't worry your-

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self, I'll look after my wife, and, too, after you, who, if I am not greatly mistaken, need it pretty considerably.'

"He didn't, of course, understand a word I said, but left me with so sulky and even threatening a manner that I looked for bad consequences for myself should opportunity arise at any time.

"To hurry on, ten years went by without disturbing influence of any kind. Ten peaceful years. Waited upon hand and foot by Meta, I fear that I developed a somewhat dependent and selfish spirit. Only every now and again would force itself upon me a passionate desire for the land of my birth; for the larger freedom of civilisation and intelligent intercourse.

"This was but a passing thought, but it strengthened with time, until when, as I have said, ten years had slipped away, the longing became painful, and more almost than I could bear.

"I think Meta saw my trouble written in my eyes. Women, be they of what hue they may, are keen to read the souls of the men they love, and she did love me. I knew that; knew it even better afterwards, to my life-long sorrow and regret, when sorrow and regret were all too late.

"One chick we had, a boy, and in build and temperament my own image. Like his mother he was brown, but of a lighter tint. He was as brave as a little lion, too, and when, as was our wont, we went down to the lagoon for a swim, and a fishing raid, he would excel even me in his diving and swimming feats and gambols.

"One day—shall I ever forget it? I can't for it is burnt into my brain. One day, in the early morning we went down to the bay, and my lad, before I could stop him, must needs start to swim right across to the coral ridge.

"He reached it in safety, and I watched him, with proud tears in my eyes, as he stood, dripping with brine, the water-drops upon him shining like diamonds in the morning sun.

"Presently I noticed him turn his face seawards, and when I too looked in the same direction I saw—I can see it now—the white sails of a ship! But that was not all.

"Making good way towards the shore and me, having passed through the gap in the reefs, was a boat, manned by half-a-dozen white men.

"Was I mad? Was it wicked to parley with such a boon, that seemed to come straight from the hand of Providence?

"Still, his face now turned towards me, my boy stood gazing, eyes-wide, at the boat near now to the strand.

"Strange that, for the moment, Meta was forgotten; my son was there too, but as a being of another world. What a wretch I feel now, felt in my inmost soul even then.

"When within a short distance of the shore, the strangers hailed me. I must have presented a strange figure, sun-burnt, naked, save for a loin cloth, and with hair and beard long and dishevelled.

"How can I describe the issue? Before I could consciously collect my thoughts I found myself in the boat and the bow oarsman preparing to put off.

"The reason for prompt action was soon clear to me.

"Flying from out the thicket of cocoa-palm down towards the boat was a woman. My heart, if not my eyes told me who it was. Meta! my wife! and behind her a yelling, furious crowd of savages.

"Swift as a roe she sped nearer, until with a last convulsive bound she clung hold of the boat's prow.

"'Love—love!' she wailed. (I had taught her that word, and for ten years it had been as music in my ears.)

"'Love—love!' Oh! how the swim in her eyes as I saw it then, mocks me and stabs me to-day!

"The man in the bow had just succeeded in shoving off into deep water, when the foremost among our pursuers (I will swear that it was Obishama) made with his club a swinging blow at my Meta's head. She fell backward with a little cry, and then—lay still as the ground itself.

"For the moment I was a madman, and but for the boat's crew would have sprung overboard, to sell my life as an atonement for hers.

"As if their object were now accomplished, the demon horde melted away into the palm-brake. The two last things I saw through the almost blinding mist of bitter self-reproach and anguish, were the still, extended form on the sand, by the water's edge, face upturned to the sky, and upon the coral reef, standing out in clear relief against the horizon, that other, the lithe, bare figure of my little nine-year-old son.

* * * * *

"Thirty years!—thirty years! It seems but as yesterday. Yes, I've had news, and that only quite of late. A missioner, a traveller in those seas, told me a month ago that the present king of the island (its name I never did know) is a man of evidently English blood. His rule is firm and wise, so much so that the savagery of former days is now battened down for ever.

"From certain, and to me, sure signs I know this king to be my son. I shall never see him *here*, for my course is nearly run, and port is in sight.

"Yet can I see him with the eyes of my heart, and when we do meet, as meet we shall, perhaps he will tell me that he has forgiven me. Mayhap, too, Meta, my wife will be with him, the same smile on her lips, the same tender look in her eyes as when, thirty years ago, she saved me from death, and gave me the gift of her life's great love."

RALPH ENDERBY.

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The Wrong Man.

I was at Stockholm simply as a tourist and sight-seer, and I was all alone. I had no idea of meeting anyone I knew, and a surprise awaited me on the first night of my arrival when a man whom I clearly saw was a Polander edged along up to me on the verandah of the hotel as I smoked my cigar and said:

"You are discretion itself, Mr. Grelling. You have registered under another name. How were matters in London when you left?"

"I don't exactly understand you," I replied as I looked him over and made sure that we had never met before.

"I admire your caution," he said with a laugh, "but you need have no fear of me. You see I have my credentials."

He took a card from his pocket on which were inscribed three capital letters of the Greek language with a curious scrawl beneath, and as I looked without being able to make head or tail of the thing, he whispered:

"The others will be here inside of two days, and we will have a meeting. I have been here three days, and I find nothing to alarm me. I trust matters in London are all right?"

"As far as I know," I replied, as I returned his card and wondered whether he was trying to cheek me or had really mistaken me for somebody else.

"Good. We can settle all the details in an hour after the others get here. It will be as well that we are not seen together, but I will notify you when we are ready."

When he had gone I made up my mind that he had mistaken me for another man, but I could not quite understand his expressions. He was evidently in Stockholm by appointment, and others were to arrive later, and a Mr. Grelling, who was no doubt an Englishman, was mixed up in the affair, if not the leader. The matter puzzled and annoyed me for half-an-hour, and then I dismissed it from my mind.

Three hours later, as I retired to my room, the stolid-faced and wooden-headed waiter who carried my light hung about in a queer way after setting the candle down, and I finally gave him a small coin and waved him out. Instead of going he whispered to me:

"I wish to warn you. Strange men have been here for a week. I think they are waiting for you."

"But who can be looking for me?" I queried in reply.

"You know best. Good-night and Heaven preserve you. I will keep my eyes and ears open for you."

I wanted to question the man but he hurried away and left me more befogged than before. I spent an hour trying to draw some satisfactory conclusion and then fell asleep.

Next morning at breakfast the same man waited on me. I had a little table by myself, and while bringing my dishes the waiter whispered in my ear:

"The two strange men are at the fourth table. I am sure they are Russian spies and will watch you."

Now I had the key to the mystery. There was some sort of a conspiracy on foot, probably against the peace of the Czar, and the conspirators were to meet at Stockholm.

From what I had read and heard of such affairs the plans and plots generally originated in England or Switzerland, but these men had selected nearer ground. Their plot must have been suspected, or the Russian spies would not have been there. Yes, the two men were Russians, and though their idea seemed to be to pass for merchants they made a poor pretence at it.

I don't pretend to say that a spy can always be spotted offhand, but I do assert that after one of them has followed the occupation for several years there are many ways in which he betrays his calling to an observing eye. They cast many furtive glances in my direction, and when I realized that I was to be under espionage I felt a spirit of devilry take posession of me. I would carry off the *rôle* of conspirator with brazen cheek.

For the next two days I was closely shadowed. Whenever I wandered about the town, one of the two men followed me. No doubt it was noted down whom I addressed, when I took my meals, how many cigars I smoked and all other little details.

After the first day of this spy business the same stolid faced waiter slipped into my room with pale face and whisperingly exclaimed:

"Those spies are following you everywhere. For goodness' sake be careful. Ah, me, but who could have put them on the scent!"

"See here, Hans," I said as I put my hand on his shoulder, "you evidently know a good deal about this affair, and I wish you would tell me what the dickens it all means. Has your gang planned to rob a bank, steal a steamboat, or upset the Russian Government? I don't like to be kept in the dark like this."

He looked at me open-mouthed for half a minute, and then a broad grin stole over his face. He thought I was getting at him to test his prudence and loyalty.

"You will carry it through all right," he finally said, with many heavy nods of his head, and he went away looking very well pleased.

At the end of another twenty-four hours I got a further insight into the mystery. I had strolled into another hotel not far away to examine the register, as a globe-trotter invariably does for no reason he can explain, when a traveller entered who might have been my twin brother so far as outward appearances went. He was of my height and weight, had the same coloured eyes, hair and moustache, and I believe our own mothers would have wondered which was which. He stared at me, and I stared back, and I wandered back to my own hotel, knowing that the real man from London had arrived.

An hour later the Pole came to me in a great funk. He had confused the two of us, as well he might, and given his little affair away to a stranger. He started to say something, but I stopped him with:

"I have seen your chief and know how the mistake came about. Nothing you say to me will go farther. What you are up to I don't know and don't want to know, but don't mix me up in it. Good day."

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He mumbled blessings on my head and disappeared to be seen no more, nor did the twin brother call on me or send me any word.

My waiter was also thoroughly flabbergasted when he discovered that a mistake had been made, but a few words quieted him.

The Russian spies must have had a bad time of it trying to settle on the right man, but they finally decided in my favour. The other Englishman was free from surveillance, while I was dogged closer than before.

At the end of a week and while they were still dogging me, and I was rather enjoying it, there was a fire on board a ship in the harbour.

It was about nine o'clock at night, and a great crowd gathered on the wharves to watch the conflagration. I made one of the number, and in my anxiety to secure a good view I mounted the bows of a smart looking brig lying at a wharf.

I was hardly over the rail before two men followed and seized me and hustled me down into the cabin. They were the Russians who had been spying on me.

Of course I protested and made a great noise but I was run into a stateroom and locked up, and within an hour the brig was out of the harbour. It seemed as if she had simply been waiting my arrival on board. We had been under weigh a couple of hours when my door was opened, and I was ordered to step out.

I found the captain of the brig, the two spies and a Russian government official awaiting me."

I have told you that the other man and I looked to be twins, but I had not time to look for little details. As I sat down opposite the Russian official he began comparing my description and appearance with a written description, and at the end of five minutes he rose up and thundered at the two spies:

"Dolts! Idiots! Blunderers! You have arrested the wrong man! This is not the proper man."

There was a row that would have drowned a band for the next ten minutes. The spies protested that I answered the description given them and had carried off the character in all ways, and the official shouted at them:

"Has he a mole on his chin? Does his left eyelid droop a little? Is there a scar on his right hand thumb? Oh, you blunderers and incompetents, but you will be rewarded for this!"

"If not too much trouble," I said to the official as he got through his storming, "will you kindly explain why I have been made a prisoner in this fashion? Of what am I guilty? If guilty of anything, by what authority do you take the law in your own hands?"

I was told that it was a mistake, but got no other satisfaction. The brig was put about, but as the wind fell we did not make the harbour until after daylight. Then I was bumped on the wharf without apology.

I walked straight to the British consul and told him the story, his reply was:

"Why, man, you had best thank your stars instead of looking for an apology. When the Russian officials get hold of the wrong man by mistake, he is generally sent to Siberia to cover up the blunder."

Later on I found that the other Englishman and his party left Stockholm the same evening, but where they went and what sort of conspiracy they had on hand I never ascertained.

C. B. Lewis.

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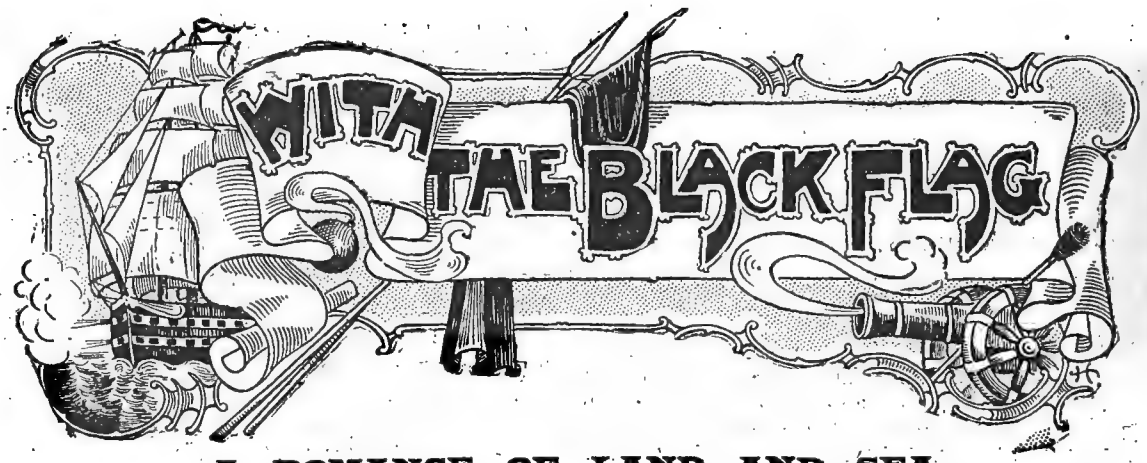

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

BY WILLIAM WESTALL.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty. He is intrusted with dispatches for delivery to Bolivar, the Supreme Chief.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic. He received Wyvenhoe and Cautley on their arrival in Venezuela.

Dona Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who accompany Wyvenhoe when he takes the dispatches to Bolivar.

CHAPTER XVI.

DON ANTONIO RETURNS.

BOLIVAR eyed me askance, but before he could answer a crowd of generals and colonels spurred up to him demanding vengeance for this further act of royalist treachery and urging an immediate advance on Calabozo.

"Do you think you could take it?" he asked, smiling ironically.

"Only give us the chance and you shall see," they cried, flourishing their spears and waving their bannerols.

They showed no lack of spirit these wild warriors, and in action, to give them their due, they were nearly as brave as their words.

"You shall have the chance. I promise you that, but not to-day," returned the Chief. "As yet we know little of the enemy's strength, and nothing of his intentions, and to-morrow or a little later I expect reinforcements. Till then, patience."

On this the commotion ceased, though the generals made no secret of their displeasure at not being allowed to lead their tatterdemalions against Calabozo, which, though its walls, built as a defence against "Indios brutos," were of mud, would not easily be taken so long as it was held in force by Morillo and his Spaniards.

"I am obliged to humour them occasionally," observed Bolivar in English. "The hold of a patriot chief over followers who serve without pay is not like that of the commander of an army of regulars who has the means of inforcing strict discipline. You have no idea how many difficulties I have to contend with, and will not I am sure, judge us by European standards."

This confidential aside, and the friendly, almost deprecatory tone in which it was spoken, so surprised me that I could only say:

"Of course not, Señor General."

Later in the day I met Don Iago, who had been appointed to the command of a battalion of blacks. He shared to the full my sorrow and indignation over Don Antonio's fate.

"Did anybody ever have a brighter or braver comrade?" he said. "I had got to love the fellow; and to think of his being so wantonly sacrificed makes me wild with anger and grief."

"I suppose there can be no doubt that he is dead."

"Not a shadow of a doubt. Morillo would not give him time to say a prayer, as Bolivar well knew when he sent him on his fatal errand."

"Of course he knew. Besides, Paez protested. What could be his motive?"

"Revenge, or rather dislike. He bore Bonanza a grudge and I have heard say that Don Simon never forgives an injury or forgets a grudge."

"The same idea occurred to me, but it is hard to believe he could be so base."

"He betrayed General Miranda to the Spaniards, which was even baser."

"Yet he is faithfully served by his officers, and the privates seem to be devoted to him."

"Some of them are, though if it were not for Paez he would have no following on the llanos, and they like him because he lets them plunder and does not bother them with too much discipline. Besides, Don Simon has good qualities, one is the art of winning the affections of his colleagues, when it pleases him to make the effort. Moreover, they know that he is indispensable."

"As a general?"

"As a Supreme Chief. We have better generals and better organisers, but there is nobody else whom the politicians and the army would obey. If Bolivar were to fall the rebellion would collapse. There are people who think that the departure of the Spaniards will be the signal for civil war. However, that does not concern us at present. Was anything particular said after Bonanza went down?"

"You could not well have acted otherwise or said less," continued Santleo when I had told him what had passed. "All the same, I regret that circumstances compelled you to say so much. Don Simon may resent it; on the other hand he

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may not, may even like you all the better for your boldness. Let us hope so, for though when he takes to a man he cannot do too much for him, he is a subtle and dangerous enemy."

"You mean that if he has taken a particular dislike to me I may expect a stab in the dark?"

"Not literally. I don't think *el Tio Porsupuerto* is likely to suborn anybody to murder you. There are other ways of gratifying a grudge, as Don Antonio found to his cost."

"El Tio Porsupuerto" was a nickname by which Bolivar was known among the troops, first bestowed on him by Paez because of the chief's habit of answering: "Porsupuerto" (of course) when he did not want to commit himself to an opinion.

As I was still unattached and the Chief had no present need of my services, and had given me leave to dispose of myself as I thought fit, I accompanied my compadre to his quarters, and there spent the night in a hammock, which made a pleasanter bed than the bare ground.

In the cool of the evening Santleo paraded his blacks for my inspection, and put them through a few simple evolutions. They were stout fellows enough, but indifferently armed and I did not see a shirt amongst them. However, as Don Iago observed, men who have always gone naked are not fastidious in the matter of clothes. He seemed to be a keen soldier and an efficient officer, and was doing his best with the very raw material which the Chief had placed at his disposal, getting very little help from his subalterns, who were almost as raw as the men.

As one part of the encampment was rather exposed and too near Calabozo, to be quite safe Santleo had caused several trees to be felled in such sort as to form a breastwork which might be held for a short time against a superior force; as it proved, a wise precaution, for shortly before daybreak we were roused by the rattle of musketry, on which he ordered the reveille to be sounded and the battalion to fall in, and he and I, mounting our horses, rode forward to reconnoitre.

We had not gone far when we met two officers, riding in hot haste, who reported that one of General Zedeño's infantry regiments had been surprised by the enemy and nearly cut to pieces, and that a strong body of the enemy was advancing in our direction, a statement which was immediately confirmed by the appearance of a number of fugitives, running for their lives and followed by several squadrons of Morillo's dragoons.

"Shall you fall back?" I asked Don Iago.

"No, I shall post my men behind the breastwork and among the trees and hold the position till help comes."

"And I will bring you help," I said, wheeling my horse round.

"Good! Report to the Chief, but see Paez, if you can; he is the man for prompt action."

On this I galloped off, taking the nearest cut to head-quarters, which were fully two miles away, the encampment being much scattered, partly out of carelessness and over-confidence, more perhaps out of necessity, the troops having to bivouac where there was shade from the sun and water for themselves and horses.

I was well mounted and armed, in addition to my sword and pistols, with a lance which had been presented to me by one of my brother staff officers, *al uso del pais* (according to the custom of the country). But I anticipated no difficulty in making my point since, though the Godos were coming on apace, all, so far as I could see, were behind me and I had a good start.

The savannah was almost level and comparatively open, albeit a few scattered palm groves and high bushes impeded my view and might enable an enemy to get ahead of me unperceived. Hence, though I rode hard, I rode cautiously, keeping a keen look out and giving "cover" as wide a berth as possible without deviation too much from my course.

I had gone about a mile when I heard a shout to my left rear and looking thitherward saw a man running towards a thicket and followed by a brace of Spanish dragoons. He ran so fast, impelled by fear of death, that it was even betting whether the troopers would overtake him before he gained the bushes. Of me they took no notice, possibly had not yet seen me, and I could easily have ridden away from them as from a strictly military point of view, and considering my errand, I perhaps ought to have done.

But a man's life was at stake, and without considering aught else, I wheeled round, gave a shout to encourage the fugitive, couched my lance, and galloped towards his pursuers, who on seeing me pulled up and seemed uncertain what they should do next.

After a moment's hesitation one of them whipped out his sword, the other a pistol, and came on to meet me. I went for the first, keeping him to my right and going at full gallop, as much to confuse his aim as to add impetus to the shock. The bullet went wide, as I thought it would, and before the fellow could fire again my lance was through his body, where I left it, and drawing my sword, gave my attention to his companion, who, however, avoided the encounter by riding away, which I allowed him to do in peace.

"Very neatly done, Señor Wyvenhoe, and I am vastly obliged to you. You should have recovered your lance, though. However, for a beginning it was by no means so bad, and with a little more practice you will be as expert as any of us."

"You, Don Antonio; you here! Good gracious, I thought you were dead and buried!" I exclaimed, in utter and most unutterable surprise. "What—? But we must away; mount this fallen trooper's horse (which I had caught) and come along."

This he did, and we rode on together.

"How on earth did you escape?" I asked. "We all felt sure that you were killed, either by the volley from the walls or afterwards."

"Not a bullet touched me, though my horse was riddled. Yet I had been killed all the same but for a happy thought. Knowing that all foreign officers who may be taken prisoners are examined by Morillo before being executed, I

Before the fellow could fire again my lance was through his body.

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His amazement and consternation on beholding Don Antonio were unspeakable.

said I was English and took your name in vain, which procured me an interview with the general, who, as I presently gathered, being alarmed at the reports he has heard of the formation of another British legion, is anxious to detach British officers from the patriot cause.

"After expressing his surprise that a man like me could bring myself to serve in so rascally an army as ours, and under such a fool of a general as Bolivar, he offered me, as the alternative of death, a commission in his own army. I had, of course, no intention of accepting his offer, but I listened to him and pretended to be almost persuaded, and in the end he gave me twenty four hours for consideration, and sent me to the main guard. Fortunately there was nobody present who knew English, and I mimicked, I think not unsuccessfully, both your accent and your manner, my dear friend.

"I was well treated, neither put in a cell nor very closely guarded, and when about two hours before dawn I heard the bugles blowing I knew there was going to be a sortie and my chance had come; so taking advantage of the confusion and the darkness, and the sentry's back being turned, I slipped out, made for the walls, which are not very high, dropped into the river, and got clear away. In order to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy a second time, I went a long way round, dodging from bush to bush, and at the very moment when I thought myself safe those confounded fellows spied me and gave chase, and had you not come up just in the nick of time would have given me my quietus."

"You are a lucky man. What people say is quite true. You have more lives than a cat; but for goodness sake don't repeat Morillo's remarks about Don Simon and his army. If they came to his ears he might think you had invented them."

I suspected that Bonanza had incurred Don Simon's enmity much more by his reckless speaking than his practical joking.

He promised to heed my warning and we presently arrived at head-quarters.

The army had no tents, but in many places the troops had built huts, or rather, sheds, roofed with palm leaves and open at the sides. In one of these Bolivar's hammocks had been slung and as we came up he turned out.

His amazement and consternation on beholding Don Antonio were unspeakable. He trembled and turned pale as though he saw before him a veritable ghost, as probably he thought he did.

"Good morning, excellency," quoth Bonanza saluting.

"*Cien mil diabolos!* Where have you come from?" gasped the Supreme Chief.

"From Calabozo. The Godos are beating up our quarters and I profited by the opportunity to get away."

"The dickens they are! That accounts for the firing. I thought it was merely some of the pickets exchanging shots."

"One of Zedeño's regiments has been almost destroyed," I put in, "and unless Major Santleo is speedily supported, he, too, will be overwhelmed."

"*Madre de dios!* Is it so bad as that?"

"Shall I inform General Paez?"

"By all means. Tell him to go to Santleo's help, and try to keep the enemy at bay until I can bring up the guns and General Zaraja's infantry. Ride with him, then return and report. You will remain here, Captain Bonanza. I want to know about the state of things in Calabozo."

Straight as a die I rode to the llaneros' camp and found them under arms, for Don Paez, having heard the firing, had mustered his men and was ready for whatever might befall.

When I had given my message, he gave a great shout and ordered his men to advance. They answered with a cheer, for these rough fellows were true soldiers, and rejoiced in the call to battle, as hunters rejoice when the blast of the horn and the bay of the hounds tell them that a fox has "gone away."

Don José, galloping ahead, tossed his lance in the air, caught it as it fell, then threw it forward and picked it up without drawing rein; and there was not a man of his *guardia di honor* who could not do the same.

As we rode on the rattle of musketry, at first almost inaudible, grew louder, and when we sighted the palm grove it was shrouded in smoke, out of which came flashes of fire and a din of deadly strife.

Don Iago was beset by a regiment of cazadores, two or three squadrons, and a couple of field pieces.

On seeing us the cazadores tried to form square, but before the movement could be effected the llaneros were at them with their lances, and the regiment broke up and fled, while the cannons and the cavalry fell back on the main body, which was deploying in their rear.

Santleo was delighted with his black fellows.

"They neither flinched nor showed fear," he said, "and if they were a little better trained and armed I would back them against the best infantry of Spain."

"That is in the future, and we have to deal with the present," observed Paez, sharply. "You cannot hold this wood against a whole division of Godos. Fall back at once towards headquarters, and I will cover your retreat; and you, Major Wyvenhoe, return to Don Simon, and say that unless he hurries up with the infantry and artillery we shall lose the day."

"Si, Señor General," I answered, and went off at full gallop. There was much confusion at headquarters. Bolivar had not expected that the Spaniards would make a sortie in force, and, like everybody else except Paez, was taken by surprise. Nevertheless, two or three battalions were got together, and, with four field pieces, sent to reinforce Santleo.

I was sent back a second time, with orders to tell Paez to do his utmost to keep the Spaniards in check until the chief could bring up all his strength.

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This he eventually did, though none too soon, and but for Don José's military aptitude and desperate valour the day had ended in disaster.

Though the action presently became general, it was less a pitched battle than a series of isolated engagements, and ended in a draw, our irregular horse being as much superior to the enemy's cavalry as were his foot regiments to our infantry, though some of the latter showed good courage, and with stricter discipline and better leading would have done wonders. It was also greatly in Bolivar's favour that only half of Morillo's army were Spaniards, the remainder being native levies as many-hued and as ill-trained as our own.

The sun shone pitilessly in an unclouded sky, and the dust rising from the brown earth and mingling with the battle smoke was suffocating. As many men fell from exhaustion as from the enemy's fire. By noon both sides had had more than enough and the royalists retired in good order to Calabozo, unpursued even by the llaneros.

Our losses were heavy, probably heavier than the Spaniards', and had not the Supreme Chief expected reinforcements he would have been forced to retreat. Soon these began to flock in. Don José's popularity and the fame of his exploits brought him many recruits of the right sort, and a few days after the battle General Urdenetta arrived with a whole division. His appearance at the front, however gratifying to Bolivar, boded me no good, the more especially as I had made up my mind that unless he apologised I would ignore our previous acquaintance and, save on service matters, hold no converse with him whatever.

When I mentioned my resolve in this regard to Santleo he looked very serious.

"I think you are right," he said after a moment's thought. "After what has happened you could not without loss of self-respect treat Urdenetta as a friend. All the same, trouble will come of it."

"In what shape?" I asked.

"I wish I could tell you—probably in some unexpected shape. At present Bolivar may or may not be ill-disposed towards you. I rather think he is halting between two opinions, but if you cut Urdenetta you will have two enemies equally powerful and unscrupulous."

"And I shall have two friends—yourself and Bonanza, and I think I can count on both of you."

"On me you may count to the death," rejoined Santleo warmly. "Also I am sure, on Don Antonio."

"So if I get into a scrape you will help me out, and I shall take care not to let either Bolivar or Urdenetta catch me tripping."

"That is not necessary. Urdenetta did not catch you tripping at Santa Margarita However, let us hope for the best, and fore warned is forearmed."

This talk took place in Don Iago's quarters, a shed open to the winds and furnished with two makeshift chairs, a ditto table, and two hammocks—one of which was occupied by him, the other by me. A sentry, black as ebony and nearly as naked as our first parents before they went astray, stood under a tree in a statuesque attitude; the guard, all of the same colour, reposed in the shade. In the distance could be seen other sentinels and the piled arms of several outlying pickets, the recent surprise having put everybody very much on the alert.

The only discernible objects that moved were a man, a dog, and a mule.

"Who would walk on the llanos when he could ride?" queried Don Iago, turning lazily in his hammock.

"Who would do either, in the heat of such a day as this, if he could help it?" said I. "Why does not he rest in the shade till the sun goes down? The fellow must be a salamander."

"An Indian salamander, then."

"How do you know? He may be a Spanish creole, a Zambo, a black, or even a European."

"By his gait, which also tells me that he comes from far away. No native of the plains or the coast walks as that man walks," quoth Don Iago, gazing intently at the stranger, who was making straight towards us.

"If it were possible I could almost believe," he added, in a low, intense voice, as though he were unconsciously thinking aloud, "I could almost believe it was the Cazique. . . . But no, it is not possible. It cannot be—and yet . . . . Cuerpo de Dios! It is nobody else. Tamanac himself." And Santleo, slipping from his hammock, ran to meet the new comer, of whom he made much, leading him by the hand.

"The Cazique Tamanac, my oldest friend, the friend of my father, and one of the best of men," he said, making his guest sit down in his hammock, while he, himself, took one of the chairs.

The Indian, though no longer young, was a man of splendid physique. In complexion he was lighter than the generality of his race; of stature tall; his limbs were muscular and beautifully moulded, his hands and feet small. His thick, lank hair was parted in the middle and confined by a narrow red fillet, so as to show his broad forehead and shapely ears, in which he wore silver rings, and from his neck hung a golden cross, a bag of charms, and a toothpick fashioned out of a condor's quill.

Tamanac's sole garment was a woollen *ruana*, wrapped loosely round his waist and reaching to his knees, leaving bare his broad chest seamed with scars; his only weapon a long double-edged knife, with a white handle carved out of a cayman's bone. He wore a broad-brimmed sombrero of split palm leaves, and sandals made of the white fibres of

As many men fell from exhaustion as from the enemy's fire.

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the aloe. For the rest, he had a light and springy gait, carried his head high and his shoulders well back, his face was handsome and thoughtful, and he bore himself with a dignity befitting his years and his rank.

"The Cazique has made a long journey; he comes from the mountains," added Don Iago.

"From your home?"

"Yes, from my home."

"I hope he brings good news."

"I also, but I have not heard his news yet. He has been travelling since sunrise, mostly on foot to save his mule, and before he talks must eat and drink."

Then, after a short pause, Santleo, who was more excited than I had ever seen him, added in English:

"You said a little while ago that you had two friends. Now you have three, for my friends are Tamanac's friends, his foes my foes. Is it not so, Cazique?"

"It is so. You shall be to me as a son," said Tamanac, giving me his hand which I took in silence, being unprepared with an answer, for though I had guessed that Santleo could speak English this Indian's knowledge of the language surprised me beyond expression.

"You know English then? I thought so," was for the moment all I could say.

"That, there is no denying, though I doubt whether I should have told you at present, had I not been constrained hereto by the Cazique knowing so little Spanish."

"But who is he? How does he happen to know English and where are these mysterious mountains whence he comes?"

"None of these questions I am free to answer, though I would fain do so. It seemeth unkind to repay your frankness with reserve, but verily it is not so, and I hope the time is not far distant when I shall be permitted to deal as openly with you as you have dealt with me. In the meanwhile we are as good friends as ever. Is it not so?"

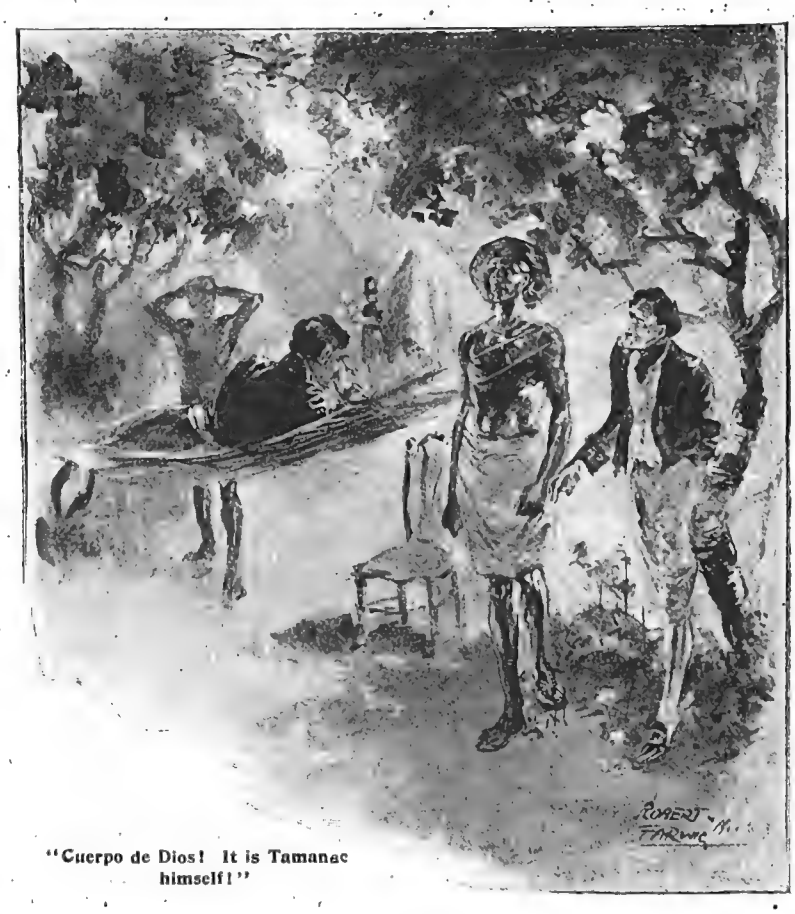
"Surely. And the Cazique being your friend I count him also as mine. But he has news for you and it is time for me to go."

"Not at all. Tarry yet a little longer. His coming is no reason why you should depart."

"It is a matter of duty. I may be wanted at headquarters. And I shall see the Cazique, who will doubtless stay with you for a day or two, again."

"For several days I hope; we have much to say to each other, and after his hard journey he will need a long rest."

On this we parted and I went away wondering and greatly tantalised. How this Indian, who knew little Spanish, had picked up English, what were his relations with Don Iago, where the mountains whence the journey was so long and hard, why Tamanac had come and Santleo's lips were sealed I asked myself, again and again, and the more I wondered the more I was puzzled.



"Cuerpo de Dios! It is Tamanac himself!"

But what perhaps puzzled me most was Santleo's English. He spoke it as fluently as I did, yet with an accent and intonation which, albeit I could not call them foreign, were strange and unfamiliar.

Moreover his phraseology was quaint and his pronunciation of certain words peculiar, reminding me at times of that of an old Quaker from the north of England who used to visit at my father's house when I was a boy, all of which suggested the probability of Don Iago having acquired the language from some old person who had left the country when he was very young.

By the time I came to this conclusion I had arrived at headquarters, so endeavoured to dismiss the subject from my mind, but strangely enough one of the first questions put to me by Bolivar was whether I had learnt aught more as to Santleo's connections and his family, a question to which I was fortunately able to give a straightforward answer.

"I thought you would have succeeded ere this in gaining his confidence," observed the chief, in a tone of disappointment. "But it must be as I said, his people are fanatical royalists, and he wants to keep them in the dark as to his whereabouts and present occupation. What I am most curious about is their name, for Santleo, you may be sure, is only a *nom de guerre*."

And then he spoke of his plan of campaign, which was very grandiose. His army would shortly number fifteen thousand men, and, after taking Calabozo by assault, he proposed to march over the mountains and end the war by the capture of the capital. On several points of detail he asked my opinion, which, knowing that Don Simon preferred praise to criticism, I gave with circumspection. The only

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suggestion I ventured to offer was that it might be well to invest the town at once, so as to prevent Morillo from falling back towards Caracas, where he would find both reinforcements and supplies, and be able to offer us battle on ground of his own choosing.

"That has been thought of and shall be done," was the answer, and the subject being exhausted I was about to retire when Urdenetta appeared on the scene.

"As you two have met before there is no need of an introduction," remarked the Chief urbanely. "Major Wyvenhoe is on my staff, general, and acquitted himself admirably when we gave Morillo such a beating."

"Oh, yes; we have met before and know each other well, don't we, Señor Major?" answered Urdenetta with a courtly smile, and making as though he would greet me in South American fashion.

"Yes, Señor General, we do know each other," I returned, giving him the military salute and stepping aside to avoid his embrace.

A scowl passed over Urdenetta's face, and his little, deep-set eyes gleamed with anger. Bolivar, who looked both surprised and annoyed, said drily, "You need not remain, Señor Major. I have matters of importance to discuss with the general. When I want you I will send for you."

On which I saluted a second time and went my way, feeling that, as I could not have acted otherwise, I had acted rightly; also with a doubt the less, for now I knew, if I did not know before, that I had finally forfeited Bolivar's favour, probably made a bitter enemy of him, as I certainly had of Urdenetta.

(To be continued.)

AN EMINENT INVENTOR.

Of the numerous citizens of Birmingham, there is none who is more deserving of respect than is Mr. Johnson. Not only is he an amiable and upright man, but he is gifted with remarkable inventive genius. At least, such is his opinion, and those who are not personally acquainted with him seldom deny that his opinion is right.

Mrs. Johnson, however, does not regard her husband as an able inventor. She admits that he means well, but she asserts with much emphasis that when one of his inventions comes in at the front door it is time for her to fly out of the nearest available window, if her life is really worth saving.

As to one of his recent inventions, which nearly led to a tragedy in his family, it must certainly be admitted that he made a disastrous mistake, though he was actuated by the best of motives.

Mrs. Johnson was in the habit of complaining that she found it extremely tiresome to manage her sewing-machine, and her affectionate husband determined to supply some power, other than the female foot, to the machine.

After experimenting with galvanic batteries until he had burnt two coats and a carpet with acids, and after having tried in vain to construct a steam-engine that would not fill more than half the space of the room in which it was placed, he fell back upon clockwork.

In course of time he made a really beautiful engine, worked exclusively by clockwork, and fitted it to the sewing-machine. When wound up it would work the machine for five consecutive hours, and after adding to the machine an improved device for holding the cloth and leading it under the needle, he felt that he was a benefactor of the female sex, and a worthy successor of Morse and of the inventor of the steam-engine.

Mrs. Johnson was delighted with the new invention when it was explained to her, and readily agreed that the neighbours should be invited to see it in operation for the first time.

The neighbours responded heartily to the invitation, and at seven-thirty on the third day of last month, Mr. Johnson's drawing-room was filled with the leading citizens of Birmingham and their wives—that is to say, those who, having spoken favourably of Mr. Johnson's inventive genius, were by him regarded in the light of leading citizens.

At eight o'clock Mrs. Johnson sat down to her sewing, and undertook to run a double gusset in a new dressing-gown designed for her husband. The clock-work was wound up, the machine was started, and the gusset was stitched with twice the rapidity usual in such cases. Unfortunately, the machine did not stop when it had finished its allotted task, but continued to stitch the dressing-gown until it fairly became quilted.

Probably it would have gone on and converted the cloth into a compact bundle, sewed and resewed a dozen times, had not Mrs. Johnson come to the rescue, and attempted to cut the thread.

She did succeed in rescuing the cloth, but at the same moment the demoniacal machine fastened upon her clothing, and proceeded to sew it with insatiable energy. Vainly did Mr. Johnson try to stop his clock-work, and vainly did he strive to pull his wife away. The machine rapidly gathered her skirts into its unholy clutches, and there was every prospect that after the skirts were finished it would proceed to hem Mrs. Johnson herself, and to put a series of gussets in portions of her frame where they were not needed.

Luckily, there was one present, a young physician, who did not lose his presence of mind. He seized his knife and cut the fastenings of Mrs. Johnson—that is to say, he cut her loose. The machine was compelled to satisfy its rapacity upon her skirts alone, while the unhappy lady was wrapped in a tablecloth and removed to her private room.

This is why Mrs. Johnson is justified in denouncing her husband's inventions, and public opinion in Birmingham is decidedly unfavourable to Mr. Johnson as an inventor.

P. Weeks.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT RAILWAY TRAINS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Rosalba," by Olive Pratt Rayner, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Cissie, c.o. 102 Hunslet Hall Road, Leeds. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about HAUNTED HOUSES, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, October 15th. Post-cards only, please.

What a Sell!

I WAS travelling by the midnight express from Leeds to Dundee. The only passengers in the carriage besides myself were two young men and an elderly gentleman, who sat in the corner reading *Pearson's Weekly*.

We had just passed Errol, when suddenly the engine brake was applied, and the train made several terrific jumps.

One of the young men, evidently anticipating a serious accident, excitedly snatched the copy of *Pearson's Weekly* out of the old gentleman's hands.

Hardly had he got possession of it when the other young man made a grab at it. Then the light in our carriage went out, and a desperate struggle in the dark ensued between the two men, and I could hear the paper being torn into fragments.

When the carriage had been re-lit the two young men looked thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and apologised to the old gentleman as best they could for their disgraceful conduct.

"Oh, that's all right," he replied, "I had read the paper and I didn't care what became of it so long as I had the insurance page in my pocket."

Whereupon he produced the page containing the insurance coupon. C. I. S.

Cheap Pillows.

Two Hunslet women recently visiting London for the first time, had an amusing experience during the midnight return journey. On reaching a certain station, the porter walked up and down with pillows for the weary travellers who might hire them. Evidently the Hunsletian ladies were not in touch with the hiring spirit of the age.

"Wod's them, pooarter?" asked one.

"Pillows, ma'am."

"Heaw much?"

"Sixpence, ma'am."

"Sixpence? Wod's inside of 'em?"

"Feathers, ma'am."

"Eh? I'll tek two."

Two were accordingly handed to the good lady, who moralised to her companion thus:

"Eh, sither, th' covers are wo'th sixpence, tha knows! Isn'd id wonderful whod they con do i' th' South? Aw'm gooin' to hev two mooar o' them. Yo' corn'd git 'em so cheap i' Hunslet."

Needless to say, the two good ladies were disagreeably surprised to find they were not allowed to take the pillows away when Leeds was reached. J. B. C.

Then There was Silence.

RECENTLY, the occupants of a third class compartment were considerably annoyed by the silly remarks made upon objects that were passed, by a bouncing youth seated near the window.

His fellow passengers bore it without a murmur, notwithstanding a general wish that he was miles away. The climax was reached when, on nearing a lunatic asylum, he said:

"How nice the asylum looks from the train."

"Young man," solemnly replied an old gentleman, looking over the top of his paper, "before long you'll have occasion to remark how nice the train looks from the asylum." B. D.

Beware of the Train.

A RAILWAY company wanted to run a new line through a certain farmer's land against his wish.

One day the farmer was not overpleased to receive a visit from the company's representative, who described to him the direction in which the proposed line was to go. Said he, pointing with his hand:

"We want the line to run straight across there."

"Ay! oh, ah!" said the farmer, slowly nodding his head, and getting aggressive.

"Yes, we want to go right through by way of that barn yonder."

"Oh! do ye indeed?" warmly exclaimed the son of the soil, by this time quite wrath. "An what d'ye tak' me for? D'ye reckon I'm goin' to stan' by an' open an' shut yon barn door every time t'engine comes along?"

M. H.

Very Embarrassing.

A LADY riding in a railway carriage, was much annoyed by the fixed stare of a long, lank, sallow-looking woman sitting on the opposite seat. She had piercing black eyes, and kept them fixed on the lady's face.

Finally the train stopped at a little station, and the woman leant across the carriage and, laying a bony hand on the lady's arm, said:

"'Scuse me, but may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly," replied the lady.

"Well, I just wanted to know if your complexion is natural, or if it's one o' these inamelled kind I've heard of?"

"My complexion is quite natural, thank you."

"It is? Well, I'm jist sorry to hear it. I was hopin' it was one o' the inamelled kind, an' that you would tell me where I could git one like it. That's all. Thank you, ma'am." F. J. D.

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How She Told the Class.

A WOMAN recently took a third-class railway ticket at Birkenhead from that place to Hooton. She entered a first-class carriage, from which she was seen to emerge by an official when she arrived at her destination. He accosted her with:

"I say, missis, what class ticket have you got?"

"A third class, sir," she replied at once.

"Then why," her interrogator continued, "were you riding in a first-class carriage?"

"Oh, get away!" said the woman, "you cannot cheat me. Did I not run to the engine, count 'one, two, three,' and get into the carriage?" A. H.

Bee-fooled.

THE village of Hatfield was in a state of wild excitement, owing to the receipt of a telegram, addressed to a local resident, reading as follows;

"Queen will arrive at 3.40 this afternoon."

The telegraphist, bursting with importance, imparted the news to the delighted villagers that the Queen of England intended to pay them a visit that day, on hearing which the inhabitants turned out *en masse*, and when the 3.40 train arrived there was an expectant crowd at the station to give their Sovereign an enthusiastic welcome.

Alas, the only thing that left the train at Hatfield was a small perforated box, labelled "Live Bee, with Care." Where was Her Majesty?

It was subsequently explained that the addressee of the telegram, an apiarian, had that morning wired to the nearest town for a queen bee which he was in urgent want of.

And the crowd which had assembled to meet a bee sheepishly slunk away. W. C.

The Eskdale Express.

AN amusing anecdote is told in connection with the Eskdale Railway, upon which the rate of speed seldom exceeds six miles an hour, and where it is the custom for the train to stop and take up passengers between the stations.

On one occasion a lame old woman was walking along the line with a basket of eggs, on her way to Ravensglass to catch the market train for Whitehaven.

The driver, as was usual, brought the engine to a standstill as soon as he caught up to her, and at once told her to jump in.

"Nay, nay," replied she. "Ah's in a hurry; Ah'll be thur lang afoor ye." J. P. S.

Couldn't Understand It.

IN many parts of South Africa railways are comparatively a new departure, and in consequence a large proportion of the farmers are entirely ignorant of the way the engines work.

One stalwart colonist, who thought himself cleverer than his companions, was standing on the platform of a small up-country station during shunting operations.

He had been explaining the principles of steam as a motive power to an interested crowd, when suddenly the engine began to move backwards, pushing a string of trucks.

His jaw dropped, and he gasped out:

"I can understand how the engine pulls the trucks, but I'm hanged if I know how the trucks pull the engine back again!" M. H.

Couldn't Trust the Officials.

"PAT," said the squire, "I want you to go to the railway station and find out what time the next train leaves for London?"

"Yes, sor."

After an absence of two hours the man returned.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the squire, "what a time you've been."

"Well, ye see, yer honour," replied Pat, "I had to wait. I couldn't trust them station fellers; they'd say anything, so I stuck tight an' seed the train start wid my own eyes." J. B.

She Knew Something would Happen.

NOT long ago an old lady entered a railway carriage at a small town in Yorkshire, and it appeared that she had never been in a train before, for so she told her fellow-passengers.

The train, the carriages of which were unlighted, had not long been in motion, and had just put on speed, when it dashed into a rather long tunnel, and as it did so, the old lady was heard to exclaim in alarm:

"Oh! I've gone blind—what shall I do! I knew something would happen if I ventured on one of these things." R. L. S.

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A New Lease of Life.

Some months ago I was introduced to a gentleman who was making San Francisco his headquarters with the expectation of meeting his son, who had set out about a year before to make the tour of the world by the eastern route. Community of tastes threw us much together, and one day it was arranged that we should make a duck shooting expedition to some convenient quarter.

Tomales Bay was the locality selected, and thither we went with the intention of taking a three days' holiday.

On the second day, however, just as we were in the act of pushing off shore—I was already in the boat—Wycherly made a spring and landed just where his left foot caught somewhere about the look of one of the guns, thus letting it off and pouring the whole charge of shot into his right leg.

He fell upon the stern seat, while the man, who was just springing after him turned his energies to dragging the boat back to land.

In a moment I was at the wounded man's side, and at length got him upon the beach.

In a few moments I had ripped open his trousers' leg. From the position of the wound and the spouting of the blood it was easy to see that the posterior tibial artery had been severed, and that, if prompt measures were not taken he would soon bleed to death.

Improvising a tourniquet out of a handkerchief and a bit of stick, I temporarily stopped the flow of blood, and the attendant and I carried my now unconscious friend to a dairy ranch near by, where the hospitable farmer put a comfortable apartment at our disposal,

Nor was it a bit too soon, for the system of compression I had been obliged to use proved too weak for the great iliac artery, and, just as we laid Wycherly on a couch, the torrent of which I had been apprehensive burst forth again.

I was now, however, in a better position to act, and by the time the man—whom I had dispatched on horseback for my instruments—returned I had the case well under control. The only cause for alarm now was extreme weakness and the risk of secondary hemorrhage.

It was while watching by Wycherly's bedside that I evolved the plot which forms the gist of my story. I determined to try transfusion, and, to tell the truth, I rather congratulated myself, from a professional point of view, that chance had thrown in my way such a splendid opportunity.

I watched the men when they came in to their noon-day meal, and among the dozen or two I saw two whom I singled out as those who must serve my turn. It did not require a second glance at their ruddy cheeks to assure one less knowing than a surgeon that they possessed a practically unlimited store, so far as my purpose was concerned, of the pure life fluid of which I was in quest.

When I broached my project, they were at first very averse to it, but finally they agreed to the terms, provided it did not entail much pain.

Luckily I had some cocaine with me, and so anæsthetized the region of the median vein that they did not even feel the incision, and I accomplished a satisfactory transfusion into Wycherly's arm at the same spot, despite the fact that I had to improvise an apparatus out of a syringe and some tubing which I found in my case.

My point, however, was gained. I had succeeded in saving my friend's life, for the moment at least. I had also sent the two youths away in high spirits at having earned two months' wages in a couple of hours and with the admonition not to do any more work till I saw them again.

I had telegraphed down to San Francisco and received, by the first train, such instruments and appliances as I had ordered to be sent me.

I had left the room for a few minutes with my patient resting comfortably, but on my return, what was my horror to see that the ligature had burst, the bedclothes were drenched with blood, and the deadly pallor on my friend's unconscious face with the weak and intermittent jets of blood from the re-opened artery, told me but too plainly that he was alre dy almost past human aid.

Hastily applying a styptic and compress, I again tied up the blood vessel, meantime shouting lustily for Fritz and Wilhelm, who happened to be near by, and came running in with some other members of the family.

Before Fritz and Wilhelm had bared their arms my plan was laid. I recollected having seen that morning the carcass of a newly killed calf hanging up in the slaughter shed. I bade someone fetch me the heart and neighbouring organs.

When these arrived, finding them still warm, I selected a blood vessel somewhat larger than those I was about to cut, and speedily had four pieces of about an inch in length ready for use. I then led Fritz to the left hand side of the bed, and at once severed the cephalic branch of the median vein of his right arm at the elbow.

Raising the left arm of the dying man from the bed, I made Fritz sit down so as to bring them nearly to a level and cut the same vein at the same place. My purpose was to connect the lower extremity of Fritz's vein with the upper of Wycherly's, and *vice versâ*.

To do this I slipped the cut pieces of the calf's blood-vessel over the cut extremities of Wycherly's vein, and then inserted the corresponding ends of Fritz's vein into the other ends of the calf's vein, which served precisely the same purpose as the joint used in connecting two pieces of metal pipe. After completing the connection I brought the arms of both men close together, bandaging them tightly in that position, so as to obviate any risk of breaking the connection.

Then I took Wilhelm around to the right side of the bed and connected his left arm in the same manner with Wycherly's right. A complete and perfect connection had now been formed with the circulatory organs of the three men—they formed, in fact, one circulatory system.

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No perceptible effect was noticeable upon Wycherly for half-an-hour. It is true he was being supplied with the life giving fluid from two sources, but they were by no means abundant ones, and besides out of thirty odd pounds of blood which a healthy man possesses I am afraid to say how much he had lost.

In the case of the youths, however, a critical observer would have detected a very appreciable diminution in the colour of their faces, and in order that they might not become alarmed at any feeling of weakness, I ordered some bottles of the best wine the establishment afforded to be brought and administered it to them freely, at the same time diverting their thoughts as much as possible.

Soon I noticed that the colour was returning to Wycherly's cheeks. It was evident that his life was saved and that the measures I had employed had been the means of doing it.

About half-an-hour afterwards Fritz and Wilhelm became restive. I explained to them that to move from the position they were in, much less to have the bandages taken from their arms, would entail the death of the sick man; that their meals would be brought to them there, and that they would even have to sleep just where they were; also that I could not tell exactly how long this condition of things would last, but that while it did they would get £4 a day apiece for their services after that day, for which they would get £20 apiece.

The sight of the gold which I counted to each of them—having received a supply that morning from Wycherly's bankers—removed the last trace of discontent.

From that day on Wycherly's recovery was steady and rapid. Within a week his appetite returned, and he was strong enough to have been up and about.

Several more days elapsed, until one morning I considered it safe for the invalid to take outdoor exercise. I did not at once sever the connection which bound him to the two young Germans, partly because of some observations I had made which suggested a peculiar train of thought.

Was it fancy that Wycherly was becoming structurally and organically affected by the new blood which was now circulating through his system? Could the mere transfusion of ordinary blood into his veins have given the freshness of look, the elasticity and buoyancy of spirits which were now his, to a man who, scarcely two weeks before, had been upon the bed of death?

And could it be possible, on the other hand, that I detected a somewhat older look in the German lads who formed part and parcel of this curious physical trinity? It was with a view to observe more closely and thoroughly both the surgical and physical aspect of the case that I decided to preserve the *status quo* for a time at any rate.

Up to this time, at my friend's request, I forbore to send any intimation to his friends at home regarding the serious accident that had befallen him, as he feared to cause them unnecessary alarm.

Now, however, he requested me to write them a full account of the matter, and also of his rapid convalescence. There were, he told me, only three members of his household proper, now that himself and son were absent—namely, his aged mother, his sister and a young lady, a distant relative, who was betrothed to his son.

Before this letter was dispatched the China mail brought news from his son, who wrote to say that he found Japan so interesting that he did not propose to leave it for a month to come.

From this time on a most remarkable physiological change began to take place in the three beings who were so curiously linked together by their circulatory system. They were evidently fast becoming assimilated in physical features and conditions. Wycherly was indeed growing younger, while his companions were growing proportionately older.

Once I was able to grasp and recognise this dominant fact I found myself wondering, not so much at the fact itself as at the rapidity with which the change was being accomplished.

I could only account for this last feature of the strange metamorphosis by remembering that the blood coursing in the veins of this strange partnership was, in the first instance, almost wholly that of the young Germans, as Wycherly's vessels were well-nigh drained at the commencement of the trial. He therefore took a fresh start in life, so to speak, with a large capital of new blood, and since then he had been contributing only one-third of the supply to the common stock or partnership circulation. Accordingly only one-third of the common blood was being assimilated by old organs, while two-thirds were being assimilated by young and robust ones.

In addition to this, Wycherly's assimilative organs were being fed and their waste being carried off by blood which was day by day becoming younger as the process went on.

It was therefore impossible to escape the mathematical conclusion that Wycherly would grow younger, while Fritz and Wilhelm would grow older, till a stable equilibrium in the physical condition of the trio was reached.

I confidently looked forward to the time, and that at no distant date, when I should have the satisfaction of seeing before me three robust young men of twenty-eight, at which time there would no longer be any occasion to maintain their inforced union. I further calculated that the state of equilibrium in age would be reached in about a month from then, so that by the time my friend's son arrived from Japan there would be but the slight disparity between twenty-three and twenty-eight in their respective ages.

Two days before the China steamer was due I carefully separated the three men. The altered appearance of Wycherly, though in the highest degree striking to me, excited no surprise among the dairy people, who had first seen him in a deathlike swoon and who attributed his altered looks to returning health.

As for the young men who had become prematurely matured through keeping company with an invalid, no one thought anything of it, and no one pitied them, as they had been paid liberally for their loss of vitality.

Wycherly, however, upon his return to the city, sent each of them a cheque for an amount which amply represented the earnings of the eight years of life which they had lost. We returned to the city in company, a fashionable tailor fitted out the young English gentleman, my guest, and we arranged to meet next morning to go together to the China steamer.

"Is Mr. Wycherly on board—Mr. Stephen Wycherly?" asked my friend next day of one of the stewards.

"Mr. Wycherly?" replied the man, starting. "Why—oh, yes, I remember. Please to wait, sir, till I call one of the officers."

Presently we observed one of the officers coming forward, conversing with the steward. As he came up he bowed gravely and said:

"I grieve to tell you, gentlemen, that Mr. Wycherly died on the passage here and was buried at sea. If you

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will accompany me to the surgeon's cabin, he will supply you with all the particulars." And he led the way aft.

Sorrowfully I followed the grief-stricken parent, whose bowed head and unsteady step showed the violence of the blow.

"I am speaking to Mr. Wycherly's brother, I presume," said the surgeon, after the officer had explained our errand, turning to my companion. "The resemblance is so striking that I do not think I can be mistaken, though I should say you were slightly his senior."

"His father," replied my friend simply.

"His father! Excuse me. If you will come inside, I will show you my books."

It turned out that poor Stephen, my friend's son—his name also—had been taken down with dysentery on the sixth day out from Yokohama and had never rallied from the attack.

"Did you remark the surgeon's expression of incredulity when you said you were the father of the Mr. Wycherly who died on the passage?" I said to my friend next day as he sat in my office. "It may turn out that you will have trouble in establishing your identity. I can, of course, vouch for it, but it is not likely that my story would gain undisputed credence, seeing that it is unparalleled in the annals of science?"

"Make yourself easy on that point," returned Wycherly, with something of heat in his tone. "As to my friends at home, is it reasonable to suppose that they would fail to recognize one who is thoroughly conversant with each detail of our family affairs?"

"I hope it may turn out as you say," I remarked dubiously.

Just then my servant entered with a card. I started on reading it and handed it to Wycherly.

"Miss Gertrude Tremaine!" he ejaculated. "But how—how——"

"The lady has come to inquire regarding Mr. Wycherly—Mr. Stephen Wycherly," said the boy.

"Show her in," said I, and immediately a tall, handsome brunette appeared in the doorway.

She looked first at one and then at the other, as if undecided how to act, then advanced to where Wycherly was sitting, too bewildered to speak, and took him by the hand.

"Why, Stephen," she said, "don't you know me? But I didn't expect to find you here. I thought I should find papa here. They told me I should get news of him here at the place I used to direct all my letters to."

"Why, Gertie," returned Wycherly, regarding her with embarrassment, "don't you know me? Don't you know Stephen's father?"

"What does this mean, sir?" she said, drawing herself up with offended dignity. "But do not flatter yourself it was to see you, sir, that I came. I came at the express desire of your grandmother and aunt to see that your father was being properly taken care of. Oh, Stephen," she continued in a softened tone, "they are so very anxious about him at home."

"But, Gertie, I am old Stephen Wycherly, whom you came to see," said my friend.

"You!" she cried with a ripple of silvery laughter, as if now entering into and enjoying the joke. "You! I suppose you think that having made the tour of the world gives you the right to assume age. And now I come to think of it, perhaps it does, for you do certainly look five years older than when you left us a year ago, if that is anything in your favour."

I had been studying all this time how to extricate my friend from his dilemma. So, rising and looking at my watch, I said in a fatherly sort of way:

"You young people can get along very well without me, I think. I have an engagement which will take me at least half-an-hour; so I am sure you will excuse me."

When I returned, they were gone, and merely a note from Wycherly remained on the table, saying that he would communicate with me shortly.

From that day to this I heard nothing of him till I received this letter:

Wychwood Hall,
Norfolk.
September 15th.

My Dear Doctor,—Forgive my abrupt departure from San Francisco. You no doubt wonder how matters have turned out with me. First of all, Gertie—Miss Gertrude Tremaine, now my wife—made a terrible noise after you so considerately, and, I will add, pusillanimously went (she is looking over my shoulder now and has made me put in that last adverb) because I persisted in telling her that I was old instead of young Mr. Wycherly. By little and little and by explaining as well as I could that the treatment I had received after the accident she read about in your letter had produced the extraordinary change in my appearance, she subsided into an apparent acquiescence with what I told her. You may call it what you please, you may attribute it to the transfusion, or to the arts and wiles of Gertie, but certain it is that before we were half over the Atlantic I was head over heels in love. Nor was it a one-sided affair, either, and by the time we reached home we were engaged.

How I dreaded going home! When we got into the carriage at the railway station, the footman while touching his hat "hoped that I had left my father well." The same thing was repeated at the hall. My mother wept over the return of her grandson, and my sister fell upon the neck of her nephew. When, two months after our return, Gertie and I were married at the village church, I am satisfied that nine-tenths of the people present believed that the Stephen Wycherly who signed the register was son to the man who stood before them. And what is the use of setting people right upon the question? I have determined to remain Stephen Wycherly, Jr., since they will have it so.

Your friend,
Stephen Wycherly.

P. S.—I enclose two cheques for £100 each for Fritz and Wilhelm.

There! What do you think of that for a *denouement* to my transfusion operation?

Robert Duncan Milne.

IF YOU HAVE A RELATIVE—

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The Mad Cabman.

It was a closed cab I hailed—a yellow cab—and its number was 17766. I remember the number distinctly, and I will tell you how it happened that its number and colour have stuck so like burrs to my memory.

When I got out of the door of the Freemason's Tavern (on the night of February 15th, 1860) where the dinner of the "Benevolent Superannuated Night Porters' Association" had been held, and called a closed cab from the stand, as the cabman got down from his box and opened the door for me, with the natty twist and tug peculiar to the craft, I looked inside and saw that one of the cushions was torn nearly in half, and that the foot-mat was kicked up in a dirty heap in one corner.

Upon which observing the number of the cab to be 17766 and somewhat, perhaps, exhilarated by the "Benevolent Night Porters'" champagne, I remarked good-naturedly that "one might expect things to be at sixes and sevens in cab 17766." The cabman growled something in return, but he made no other answer.

One other thing, too, I noticed about the cab—having rather a sensitive eye for colour—and that was, that the vehicle was painted a bright canary colour, bright as the wings of a goldfinch; now yellow being a colour I peculiarly abhor, except in sunshine and calceolarias, I grumbled, half aloud and half to myself, that "it must have been a madman who painted a cab such a colour."

"No more mad than you, master," replied instantly an angry voice from somewhere or other; but whether it was the waterman, who now stood holding the door, and hoping "I would remember him," and whose pewter badge shone like silver in the gas-light; whether it was some street boy lurking round for pence; whether it was a drunken waiter, or even some mere impertinent passer-by, I could not in the hurry of the moment very well determine.

Wine turns some men into braggarts, others it makes cowards. Some sing, and others talk, when wine mounts up into their brain. Me it makes silent, wary, suspicious, and cautious. It quickens me, it extends my mental vision, it heightens all my senses. It seems, if I may so express it, to come to the windows of my mind, and rub a vapour from them, so that I see people clearer and deeper.

It specially had this effect on me the night in question, so before the cabman had yet shuffled up the capes of his coat, and tied a fresh knot in his whip, I had calculated how many miles it was from Long Acre to my cottage on Downham Green, east of Hammersmith, and observed that the horse was a good one and untired.

"Vere to, sir?" said the cabman, forcing the door with great difficulty into its proper place, and then with all his strength grinding down the rusty or bruised handle.

"To No. 4, De Beauvoir Terrace, Downham Green, Hammersmith."

"And how many miles do you make it?" said the sullen rogue again as he rudely thrust his rough face in at the window, speaking with a sour, hard voice.

I replied that I called it not quite five.

"Not much less," said the man bitterly, with a growl, as he put one foot on the step to mount to his coachbox. "And mind it's double fare, sir, after twelve," he added, returning again to carefully pull up both windows, and to re-open and re-slam the opposite door of the cab.

I did not like the vindictive look he gave me as he did this; but I said nothing, for I knew his number, and the wine made me reckless of all dangers, but I did not know the motive of all that care then.

"Will you go on," I cried, "with your ramshackle cab, or I'll get out and take another—a better one?"

"Ve'll go on fast enough presently," growled the ill-conditioned fellow with a peculiar emphasis, as he jumped up on his seat. The horse spluttered about for a moment on the stones, struck out a spark or two with its hoofs, and then sprang forward. The waterman flinging down his water-bucket took off his hat ironically to my driver. I heard a voice behind us calling for a "cab quick."

"Take care how you drive that there gentleman," cried out a policeman, and we were off. The lamps of Long Acre passed us in quick procession; it seemed but a minute and we were in St. Martin's Lane. At that instant the gusty wind bore across the road the "half past twelve," struck by the bell of St. Martin's Church.

The driver, thinking of his overfare, turned, and tapping at the window, with a brutal leer asked me if I heard "the clock a-striking" but I did not reply, for I had taken a strange dislike to the man, and my only wish now was to get as soon as possible to my own home, and rid myself of a fellow probably half-intoxicated, and evidently determined to be extortionate and troublesome.

By this time it had begun to rain fast; the mist, before wavering and wandering, now fell in long, lashing lines, that beat fiercely against the cab windows, covering them with a moving surface of water, that rendered it impossible to see out of either glass.

The wind too, beat against the cab, and flew howling before us up the street. Still we drove on fast and steadily up Regent Street, where now nothing could be seen but a stray policeman cowering up in a doorway.

I never saw such rain before nor since. It seemed to whiten all the pavement, and to madly dance and splash, as if each drop were a living thing. Yet all this time that the rain seemed ready to beat in the windows, the cabman, with head bent deprecatingly down, drove on singing scraps of a coarse sea-song:

> "Belay there! belay!" was all he would say,
> As we tossed in the chops of the Channel.

I struck the window angrily, to stop his ribald and insolent song; but he did not seem to hear me, and paid no attention to my signal; so throwing myself back in a corner of the cab, I began to turn over the chief events of the evening in my mind, just to while away the time.

Through a pleasant haze the past hours seemed again to defile before me.

I went through all the moments from the time the man at the door gave me the ticket for my hat, to the

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time that I gave it back again to the same man, and told the waiter to call me a cab from the nearest stand.

I remembered all the bows and hand-shakings of the Committee Room, and how at last, in an irregular body, we moved into the dining-hall, marshalled by the jolly-looking, portly stewards, with blue rosettes in their buttonholes.

I remembered the buzz as old Lord Foptoddle, our noble chairman, arrived and took his seat; I remembered, too, with a smile, the bursting out of "Down among the barley," from the professional singers, just as the dessert was set upon the table.

Then came the procession round the table of "the superannuated night porters," and the tremendous auctioneer's blow of the toastmaster's hammer, that heralded the first toast.

Again I seemed to hear the anile speeches, and insincere compliments, the ridiculous praise, the extravagant self-laudation on the mutual flattery system.

Again, through a din of tongues, and a clattering of plates, I heard the treasurer read those tiresome, endless items such as——

"Twenty pounds from Lord Foptoddle." (Cheers.)

"Ten pounds from the Marquis of Cheshire." (Renewed cheers.)

Again, too, for the twentieth time, I heard the treasurer thank the secretary, and the secretary thank the treasurer; and then, at last, not a little flurried, I rose myself to propose "The Ladies," who smiled upon us from the gallery. I all the time thinking only of pretty little Nelly Pledgett, my doctor's daughter, who I saw beaming and radiant in a front seat. I got quite eloquent on the subject of female beauty, and sat down amid tremendous applause.

I was replied to by the good doctor, who, thanking the meeting on behalf of the ladies, begged to propose the health of one of the best friends of the society—need he say he alluded to—"Osbert Wilkinson, Esq?" (Cheers).

But suddenly, through all these motley recollections, there flashed a painful thought—a suspicious apprehension of I scarcely knew what coming evil. It seemed, when I think of it now, almost like a presentiment of what shortly after happened.

I remembered that, as I sat down, somewhat heated by my speech and was pouring myself out a glass of that excellent sherry to wind up with, my old friend, the doctor, who by-the-bye, sat opposite to me at dinner, leant across the table and gave me a peculiarly keen and searching look from under those thick, grey eyebrows of his.

"What does that detective's look of yours mean, doctor?" said I, pleasantly enough.

"It means that you must take care of yourself," said he in a grave voice; and no more passed between us, for at that moment I rose to leave, having some business that would call me up early in the morning.

He followed me out, though, and when we shook hands in the doorway, I am not sure that he did not hold his stop watch in one hand, and feel my pulse with the other; but I was so busy helping Nelly on with her scarlet opera cloak that I did not pay much attention to the nervous old fellow, who, between ourselves, I think is getting rather past work; he worries one so with warnings and mysterious threats, as if I wasn't in the finest health, and my life insurance just advantageously settled.

Dear Nelly! what an anxious look she gave me, as I stepped into my cab! I was sure that the girl loved me.

All this evening I had been haunted with anxieties about this troublesome Chancery case of mine, "Wormwood *versus* Widgett," the vexation and delays of which had nearly driven me mad. I had really felt quite giddy over it that very morning, and began to get alarmed about over-working my brain, as my doctor taxed me with doing. I could not get the thought of it, even now, out of my mind, till a certain growing apprehension overpowered it.

We were still driving on at a strange, unequal rate—now at a furious gallop, now at a fierce trot; but where we were I could not very well determine—I looked out, for we had just got into a dark side street, and there was no lamp visible, up or down, so far, at least, as I could see without putting my head out, for the windows were jammed so close it was impossible to open them.

It was here that, for the first time, I began somehow or other to have some vague apprehension of the sanity or honesty of my driver.

Then came thronging into my brain stories I had heard years ago in Paris of a celebrated and dangerous gang of thieves who had for their accomplices many of the drivers of the night fiacres.

These fellows drove whatever passengers they could procure into obscure streets, and then robbed and sometimes murdered them. Was I to be the victim of such a scheme?—and if I was, what hope had I, alone and unarmed, to escape, at such an hour too, and on such a night?

Now was the time to resist, however, before it was too late. My resolution was prompt. I struck at the window as loudly as I could without breaking the glass; I kicked at the panels of the door; I shouted.

Suddenly, with a tremendous jolt on the kerb, the cab stopped. As the door opened I cried, "Let me out, you rascal—I'll not be robbed." I stepped forward to get out, but was met by a fierce blow on the chest from the cabman, whose eyes now literally glared with rage.

"That's enough of your mad tricks, Bedlam Billy," he said, as he thrust me back violently into the cab; "you vant a straight vescut, you do, and you shall have one," then slamming the door with a wrench that showed extraordinary strength, he leapt on to the box, and drove away with a fury that sent me reeling into a corner of the seat.

Hitherto I had dreamt only of robbery, now I was sure that the man who drove me was mad, stark staring mad. He was going to drive me into some river, or down some pit, or in some way or other to hurry himself and me to a horrible death. There he was now, standing up to drive, leaning forward to lash on the eager horse, that, frothing with pain, leapt at every blow of the man's whip.

I do not know why I did not instantly break both front windows, and pull the man off the box; or force open the door and throw myself out; or, breaking all the glass, shout to everyone through the openings that the man who was driving me had gone mad.

From whatever cause it happened, I know not but I I did none of these things.

It was now long past midnight, and I could see no one, not even a policeman.

We were fast getting into the suburbs. The speed rendered it almost certain death to leap out, and, moreover, no strength I could evoke could succeed in forcing open either door.

I waited, therefore, for some halt or pause that would

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give me an opportunity of struggling with the madman to whose care I had so unhappily intrusted myself.

On we flew, on, the horse leaping and plunging as if it would have broken from the harness. We dashed down streets, whose random lamps seemed to race past us; we tore down lanes, where houses were yet but few, except at the beginning.

Now the wheels grazed against a post, and now against a garden wall; but still the madman who drove me seemed somehow or other to struggle through all dangers, and drive on more frantically than before.

Once we dashed through a turnpike. Some voices screamed after us, and my driver screamed to them in return, but what they said or what he said I could not distinguish.

We were now racing up a long side street, where in the distance, to my horror, I could just discern through the pale light of the first daybreak, a yawning pit dug for the foundations of new houses. There was no railing on the one side, and the road was a mere deep-rutted lane, without limit or boundary.

I saw at once that our fate was inevitable; it came ere I could in any manner extricate myself from the vehicle.

The horse near the deepest place gave a plunge and reel, then dropped, spite of the redoubled lashing of the frantic driver—yes, fell, dragging the carriage with it into what seemed to me in that imperfect light, and in that whirl of my senses, a chasm of darkness at the bottom of which crouched Death waiting for his prey. There was a crash, a cry, and I fell stunned.

* * * * *

I know not how long I lay insensible; but when I recovered, it was day break, a faint red light was striping the eastern sky, and I could see surrounding objects, though in a dim, uncertain way. I was lying beside the fallen cab and its dead horse; the driver I could nowhere see.

My first impulse was to rouse myself, totter on my legs, and discover where I was hurt, or if any bone was broken.

To my great delight I found myself whole and sound, with the exception of a slight sprain in my right foot, at least so I thought at first; but as I put down my hand to touch my injured foot, a heavy red-clotted drop of blood fell on it. I lifted my hand to my forehead, and found there a deep cut, from which the blood was oozing thickly. I instantly took out my handkerchief and bound it tightly round the wound, so as, if possible to staunch the blood till I could get assistance. But where was I, and where was the driver?

"Thank goodness," I cried aloud, "that I am at last rid of that madman!"

I looked round to see what sort of place the wretch had ensnared me into.

It was an unfinished suburban street, with raw brick skeletons of houses, stretching their frail dreary walls up into the misty morning air.

Some were caged in with scaffolding, others had great heaps of mortar still piled up in front of them; unfinished iron railings, doors daubed like clowns' faces, with patches of red; windows white with circles in their panes; gateways with gaping pits where steps were to be, everywhere met my eye.

In front of me on a dead wall, "Alpha Terrace," the name of this future paradise, was written in staring whitewash letters. The only sound I could hear, far

"HOW STOUT YOU ARE GETTING!"

THERE is too often a scarcely veiled reproach in that exclamation: "How stout you are getting!" At any rate, the corpulent one is generally sensitive on that point, and perhaps feels a reproach where none is intended. Certain it is that to lose the *svelte* symmetry of youth, to broaden out, to "swell wisibly," as Sam Weller has it, and finally to become "fat and scant of breath," is a process at once humiliating and distressing, especially to those who possess that keen appreciation of personal appearance which is a part of what is termed good breeding. There is now, however, no excuse for those who have resigned themselves to carry to the grave the rotund proportions of a Falstaff. The perusal of a little book entitled "Corpulency and the Cure," by F. Cecil Russell, has afforded us not a little interest and instruction on a subject which has hitherto received but superficial attention from the medical profession. Mr. Russell has made the cure of obesity his life's study, and judging from the record of his achievements—over a thousand grateful letters from his patients are printed in the book—he has been singularly successful. The author's treatment is not by "wasting." There is no "sweating"; there are no restrictions as to eating and drinking: no drastic conditions of any kind. The medicine prescribed is simple and pleasant, purely vegetable, and perfectly harmless. Its action is twofold; it reduces the redundant fatty tissue at a very rapid rate—in some cases to the extent of one or two pounds in twenty-four hours—usually from 3lbs. to 4lbs. in a week (sometimes considerably more), and at the same time it acts as a refreshing and invigorating tonic, promoting a healthy appetite, and dispelling the feeling of depression and extreme *malaise* experienced by the majority of corpulent people. "Does the fat return after cessation of the treatment?" is a question that many will ask. No, under normal conditions it does not. Mr. Russell's treatment goes to the root of the malady, and, without having the slightest pernicious effect even on the most delicate persons, eliminates the cause of the tendency to corpulence. "Corpulency and the Cure," a dainty little book of some 256 pages, is now in its eighteenth edition. We would cordially recommend such of our readers who are troubled with what we will call, for the sake of euphony, "exaggerated *embonpoint*" to procure a copy by sending two penny stamps to Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London. This well-known specialist can claim the unique distinction of having successfully treated over 10,000 cases of obesity.

FREE—Special Offer—FREE.

To all Readers of "Short Stories" Suffering from Obesity.

Mr. Russell will be pleased to forward, post free, a copy of his book, CORPULENCY AND THE CURE, 256 pages, in a sealed plain envelope, to all applicants forwarding 2d. in stamps to Woburn House, 27 Store Street, London, W.C.

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and near, was the restless twitter of the wakening sparrows.

I touched the horse; he was dead, cold, and already stiffening. The cab lay on its side, rising like a wall before me, at the bottom of a newly-dug foundation, some twelve feet from the roadway. It was wonderful how I had escaped.

But the wretched maniac who would have taken my life, was he lying crushed beneath the cab? I must rouse myself and see if I can find any trace of him, though, doubtless, he believed me dead.

If unhurt, he had fled, howling and exulting to meet with that certain detection he had not cunning enough to escape; if injured, he had crawled away to obtain help.

As these thoughts passed through my mind, I stepped painfully over the dead horse, and again exclaiming:

"Thank goodness he is gone!" walked round to the other side of the cab, which had hitherto been hidden from me.

Good Heavens, what did I see? My enemy the madman, sitting between the upturned wheels, with his back against the body of the carriage, quietly cutting a leather trace into two long flexible strips. On his face, which was smeared with mud and gore, there was a hideous smile of malice as his eyes met mine.

"Vy, hallo, Lushington?" he said—not appearing in the least alarmed or surprised, and continuing his task—"this is a rum start of yours, isn't it? Vot are you a-going to give me for my fare? I'm not going away, Colney Hatch, vithout getting paid for your mad capers, so don't think it, Mr. Hanwell. So now then, Crazy Bill, stump up."

"It is you who are mad," I said, "and I shall leave you to your keeper."

"Ve'll see about that," said the villain, slowly getting on his legs and advancing towards me with the two leather straps, that he had now knotted into one long cord, dangling behind his back. "You must come off with me to Bedlam, my man; you ain't safe at large; a cold shower-bath is what you want, old Billy Bedlam. Now easy—hiss!—easy."

"Lunatic," I cried, "beware of a desperate man."

"There's two of us desperate, as far as that goes," said the wretch, leaping on me to bind my hands.

Then as the fellow advanced, and ere he could seize my throat I drew a long broad knife quickly from my trousers' pocket, and stabbed him under the left breast. He threw up his hands, screamed. "The madman's done it!" and fell dead on his face.

I stood for a moment spellbound, but the sight of a red stream of blood winding towards my feet aroused me.

* * * * *

I was a murderer; my brain was on fire; those drear gaunt houses seemed dancing round me; the earth seemed heaving into graves.

I erased the number of the cab, to escape detection, then threw down the knife, and fled I knew not where, with the speed of an escaped malefactor.

I shall never know where I ran. I passed through streets where shops were beginning to be opened in the bright morning sun, people called to me but I never stopped; I leapt over gates and chased through the rank grass of lonely meadows.

There was a dead silence at first in the air, and I thought I had escaped, but presently a sound, at first no louder than the bay of a watch-dog, seemed to gradually swell into the clamour and cry of a vast pursuing mob.

I could hear voices, and the tramp of feet; the wretches had dogs with them; they were tracking me. How strange that among them I seemed to specially distinguish the voices of Doctor Pledgett and his daughter Nelly! What had they to do there? I saw the mob breaking through a distant orchard, and thought I had beaten them off like so many wild curs; but suddenly in front of me at a turning I cannot avoid, run three men. They point to a dead, bleeding man lying on the ground. I dash at them. There are blows that fall crashing on my head, then there is a great darkness.

* * * * *

When I awoke it was a soft spring morning, and I was in bed in a room I had never seen before. Oh, so neat and trim! A goldfinch was singing pleasantly at the window, and there were bouquets of violets on the white cloth of the dressing-table.

A bright, rosy cloud rippled over the sky; a cheery fire sent quivering up the chimney its little yellow flames, and made a cosy, murmuring sound with its puffing jets of gas.

I rose in bed by a great effort, for I was very weak, and looked at myself in the great toilet glass that faced the bed. I saw not myself, but a pale, hollow-faced, old man, whose shaven head was bound in wet bandages. It looked like Lazarus when he ascended those steps that led from the inner darkness.

Suddenly the door opened, and who should enter but my good friend, Dr. Pledgett? It was his house I was in.

He smiled when he saw me once more conscious; but shook his finger when he observed that I was trying to speak.

* * * * *

The rest may be told in a few words. The long and the short of it was, that I had had a brain fever. The disease had broken out the night of the charity dinner, as my doctor had long expected.

The severe mental labour of that case of "Wormwood *v.* Widgett had been too much for my brain. Pledgett had, indeed, as he sat opposite to me at dinner, that eventful night, seen premonitory symptoms of the disorder, and had tried to follow my cab. By my friend's wish I had been sent to his house, for the sake of greater attention.

Of my crazy doings that night, the less said the better. They ended, however, I may mention, in my upsetting the cab myself (for I had insisted on driving), in a dangerous place, and then stabbing the cabman, whom I had mistaken for an escaped madman.

Luckily the wound, though it bled severely, had not proved dangerous. As for myself, I had then escaped from the cabman, who had tried to take me safely home seeing I was delirious, and being found in a field near Chiswick, was driven to a hospital, from whence Dr. Pledgett, hearing of my detention there, took me to his own house.

I soon recovered thanks to my kind doctor, but, alas! having before lost my senses, I now lost my heart. I spent my long days of convalescence in wandering in the garden with Nelly, in practising duets, and reading Tennyson. I soon found it impossible to be happy without her.

To-morrow week, Nelly Pledgett, I am proud and happy to say, becomes Mrs. Osbert Wilkinson, thanks to my imaginary mad cabman and the yellow cab No. 17766.

Walter Thornbury.

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THE BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no lists of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular novels, to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by first post on Monday, October 22nd, 1900.

Readers are invited to submit puzzles, acrostics, conundrums, word-squares, etc., for publication on this page. A penknife will be given to each reader whose attempts are used. All attempts must be vouched for as original, and, of course, it is distinctly understood that the sender of a puzzle must neither compete in the competition nor divulge to anyone the solution. Any reader found infringing this rule will be severely dealt with.

No. 235.

The following letters, when re-arranged, will form a double-word square, the connecting word of which is a Continental city:

AAAAA EEEEEE II M NN O PPP RRRRRR S TT W Y.

No. 236.

My initials and finals will give the names of an English poet and author respectively:

A term in physical geography; a fabulous monster; a tool; complete; a logical term; a historic island; a heraldic term.

No. 237.

Six hundred and sixty so ordered may be
That if you divide the whole number by three,
The quotient will exactly in numbers express
The half of six hundred and sixty, not less.

No. 238.

The first and third letters of equivalents of the following, when re-arranged, will give the name of a town in the Orange River Colony:

A musical instrument; to entangle; a prayer; an eastern cosmetic.

No. 239.

I am a well-known proverb:

My 20, 10, 26, 31, 19, 29, is a legal term.
My 16, 9, 12, 14, is a fish.
My 7, 1, 30, 18, 2, is an Indian title.
My 6, 30, 15, 32, is a bird.
My 11, 18, 19, 13, 29, 22, is an insect.

No. 240.

My FIRST'S my SECOND'S counterpart
In matter, form, and name;
Reverse me, and divide each part,
The likeness is the same.

My WHOLE is to all children dear,
But mostly so in France;
I always in that land appear
At youngsters' rout or dance.

RESULT OF "COMPOSITE FACES" COMPETITION.

The first prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Miss Emma Jordan, 21 Providence Street, Plymouth, whose attempt was first dealt with, and showed the least number of mistakes.

A copy of "The Raid of the 'Detrimental,'" by the Earl of Desart, has been sent to each of the following:

R. Jenkins, South Darenth, Kent.
Miss A. Clark, Cambridge.
H. R. Redman, Hastings.
E. Chalton, Spa Road, Bolton.
Miss E. E. Joyce, Taghmon, S.O., co. Wexford.
Mrs. E. Rees, Undercliffe Lane, Bradford.
Miss N. Adamson, Choppington, Morpeth.
A. Crafter, Orpington, Kent.
J. W. Shaw, Hitchin.
A. Williams, Courtney Road, Holloway, N.

SOLUTION OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 217 to 222.

No. 217. Pterichthys (rich, thy, pest).

No. 218. Rebate.

No. 219.

A cl E
M aco N
E lbin G
R eve L
I ow A
CarnarvoN
A lmon D ENGLAND—AMERICA.

No. 220. HEMLOCK.

No. 221.

P L U M
L Y R E
U R N S
M E S S A G E
A N A L
G A P S
E L S E

No. 222. £126, £84, £42, £58, £21, £29, £14, 10s., £25, 10s.

There are many other ways of working out this last puzzle, and competitors who send in other correct solutions will stand an equal chance of winning the prize with these who send in the solution here published.

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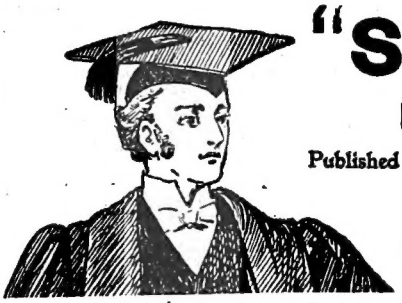

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